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AIR ASSAULT ON
CRETE

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Avalon Hill Philosophy Part 69

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ORIGINS V, VI, VII, VIII, etc.

There has always been considerable confusion on just who controls the national convention and determines where it will go every year. Although AH played a prominent role in the establishment of ORIGINS, I'd like to lay to rest the many and varied misconceptions which exist pertaining to our control, or lack thereof, over the event.

While it is true that the ORIGINS concept was born in Baltimore in 1975 under the auspices of AH and a local gaming club, we no longer run the event or have sole determination of where it shall go. In hosting the event the first two years, we were subject to criticism from some quarters for hogging the show here in Baltimore. The argument in vogue then was that a truly national show should travel from year to year to different cities giving enthusiasts from a far-ranging area a chance to attend. That opinion, then as now, seemed quite reasonable to us and with a huge sigh of relief as accompaniment, we bid our creation a fond farewell and sent it packing to New York under the aegis of SPI. All of this high corporate, behind the scenes, wheeling & dealing boiled down to a gentleman's agreement made in 1976 that SPI would support *our* ORIGINS II if we supported *their* ORIGINS III.

The choice was made without all that much gnashing of teeth and beating of breasts, the logic of it all overcoming our best intentions of unleashing unruly mayhem upon the SPI ambassador. Actually, we were able to smuggle Howie in and out of the house with nobody the wiser, although I still cringe at the possible repercussions of having harbored an SPI varlet, white flag or no. All kidding aside, both parties agreed that a convention wasn't worth having if not supported totally by both companies, because between them they reached the majority of hard corps gamers. The travelling site matter had many parallels in the real business world and is standard practice for major industry shows. Besides, we deemed it only fair that SPI should get its rightful share of the headaches we'd experienced the past two years, and looked forward to enjoying ourselves for a change at the next ORIGINS. And so it was, that after some initial reluctance by Interest Group Baltimore to give up their creation, ORIGINS put on its travelling shoes.

I might add that Avalon Hill enjoyed no monetary windfall from having hosted ORIGINS for two years. Aside from partial reimbursement for AH employees' time spent preparing the convention, all convention proceeds went into the coffers of Interest Group Baltimore. That group, incidentally, has since decided to donate all profits from the first two ORIGINS to charity.

Although SPI pocketed the profits from ORIGINS III, we can find no fault with this. Hosting an event as large and diverse as ORIGINS is a major undertaking requiring a great deal of time and hard work that could be more profitably directed elsewhere. It is our opinion that the sponsors deserve whatever financial rewards accrue from such an effort. Only if the sponsor goes to excess in charging for services rendered should the principal backers of the show—the manufacturers—step in and withhold their support to protect the hobby.

At this point, it was realized that ORIGINS had grown beyond the realm of a gentleman's agreement. An organization had to be formed with rules of procedure for selecting future sites and safeguards for the consumer. Although the first three ORIGINS had been held strictly on the basis of a gentleman's agreement between the hobby's two principal companies, that arrangement couldn't be allowed to continue—especially since the show was about to pass out of the direct control of the two principals for the first time. Both AH and SPI had a great deal to lose in terms of consumer trust by hosting a lacklustre of rip-off convention. The same could not be said for Podunque U's wargame club or John Doe's Revolving Door Game Company. Concerns with such limited roots might well consider a Mexican vacation with $20,000 advance convention receipts.

So, an agreement was drawn up to legalize the entire selection system. Wishing to avoid a semblance of administering justice upon a captive hobby, it was decided to invite other major manufacturers to belong to the Association with full voting rights. Five such manufacturers, later increased to 7, were so invited to participate; 3 boardgame companies, 3 miniatures companies, and one which covered both fields, so as to remove any possible bias which might arise between the two gaming classifications. Although not signed into existence, the agreement was used to choose between two fine bids for ORIGINS IV, with Metro Detroit Gamers the selection by a one vote margin. The system had worked, unofficially. Unfortunately, the companies involved never got around to ratifying the agreement, and when first one company and then another backed out, disclaiming any interest in becoming involved with the "politics" of the hobby, we were left with a manufacturer's committee of two. As a result, our Association never mustered a quorum and therefore could take no binding action. Information regarding what was expected of a prospective bidder was never disseminated. As a result, some pretty wild rumors circulated, not the least ridiculous of which was the published report that a bidder had to send a $5,000 advance to AH and/or SPI to guarantee their intentions. The end result was that AH and SPI again had to hold sway at the ORIGINS '79 meeting with nary another manufacturer caring to cast a vote or with any advance information for prospective bidders. The result was shocking, but predictable. No one entered a bid for ORIGINS V until Jay Hadley of PENN CON was enticed into an impromptu presentation—a year before he really wanted to make a bid. With only one reluctant bidder, and three discouraged voters, (Paul Wood of MDG cast the potential tie breaker), at least the vote for the next year's site was unanimous, but we were still without an organization to handle future ORIGINS.

Several of the companies which had dropped out of the Manufacturer's Association were firmly in favor of letting AH and SPI run the show by themselves. The suggestion was not without merit. We had proved in the past that we could handle such decisions without annoying petty politics which the others seemed reluctant to

AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE
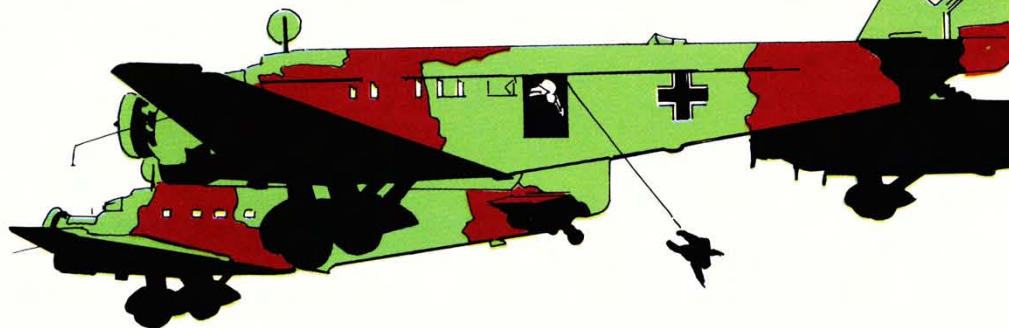
Creating a Paratrooper's Hell . . . And Jumping Into It

An introduction to Air Assault on Crete

By Mark G. McLaughlin

An airborne invasion is probably the most thrilling move for an amateur general in any modern wargame. The solid, steadfast defender can be outflanked, outmaneuvered and outfought in a series of daring, dazzling machinations as the airborne glory boys leap into the enemy's vulnerable rear areas. Confusion spreads throughout the battle zone as the defender discovers that his units are pinned, pocketed and pulverized by the parachute infantry. A few units form up and break through the attacker's cordon, but the defense is shattered, the position lost, and the game becomes a contest between the pursuers and the ragged rear guard of a routed army.

This humiliation of an opponent is the major attraction of the airborne arm. Whether it's the 82nd Airborne Division breaking up the Normandy defenses in *D-DAY* or the Fliegerkorps seizing London in *THIRD REICH*, the smug satisfaction which the attacking player derives from his brilliant move is almost enough to make the defending player wish he'd loaded the die.

Avalon Hill's newest release, *AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE*, is the first wargame which pits a purely airborne force against a relatively static defense. The attacker can play and execute an airborne assault almost from scratch. *CRETE* is a paratroop commander's dream: a blitzkrieg from the skies.

The German player has at his command the cream of the Nazi war machine: a reinforced airborne division, complete with gliders, anti-tank guns and light artillery. To support this powerful lightning bolt, he has a large force of bombers, fighter-bombers and strafing planes which can neutralize enemy anti-aircraft batteries, hinder troop movements or act as flying artillery against his opponent's strongholds. A crack mountain division is available to reinforce the paratroopers once an airfield is secured, and two convoys of tanks, artillery and infantry can be landed to further strengthen the airborne regiments.

In wargame terms, this boils down to a total of 312 ground combat factors, more than half of which are parachute forces. The Luftwaffe is represented by 21 bombardment factors and five road interdiction counters, all of which are available for three out of every four turns (the fourth turns are night turns).

The defense of the isle of Crete is entrusted to the Commonwealth (British-Australian-New Zealand-Greek) player. His forces, the remnants of the Allied army which retreated from Greece in 1941, comprise the equivalent of four divisions. Two of these divisions, the Australians and New Zealanders, have powerful combat units. The division and a half of British troops include some of the finest names in His Majesty's Army (Black Watch, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Rifle Corps, etc.), but the bulk of the force consists of a ragamuffin mish-mash of weak infantry battalions, barely mobile non-combat units and unreliable armored sections. Ten "regiments" of Greeks, each comparable in strength to a German company, round out the defender's army.

The Cretan Force (aptly named) begins with 147 combat attack factors. An additional 16 factors may come in later in the game as reinforcements. A handful of coast guns and heavy flak batteries are available to help defend against the German convoys and aircraft. The defender does have the advantage of inverting his units for concealed placement and movement, and ten decoys are provided to help further confuse the German player.

Each player's forces are dissipated across the various sectors of the three boards which comprise the map of Crete. The Commonwealth player is placed to defend four sectors: Suda Bay, and the three airfields at Maleme, Retimo and Heraklion, respectively (See Figure I). The Suda group is further divided into an Inner force (around the port), an Outer force (near the Maleme sector boundary) and a Middle force (located between the other two forces). The German player is similarly

divided, in that most of his airborne forces are pre-designated to attack in each sector of the Cretan defense.

In a comparison of the initial dispositions, (See Figure I) the German airborne forces alone either approximate or exceed the Commonwealth forces in each of the four battle sectors. Should their attack succeed in controlling an airfield within the first few turns, the might of the mountain division can upset the delicate balance of power on the island. The committal of air power, convoys and paratroop reinforcements can heavily tip the balance in favor of the Germans in any given sector.

FIGURE I: Attack factors available by sector in *AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE*.

SECTOR	GERMAN	COMMONWEALTH
Suda:	45	46: (21 Inner Suda) (16 Middle Suda) (9 Outer Suda)
Maleme:	34	26
Retimo:	25	30
Heraklion:	33	36
Any Sector Turn 1:	10	9
Any Sector Turn 6:	10	—
Any Sector Turn 7:	10	—
Any Sector Turn 8:	—	5
Any Sector Turn 16:	—	11
Convoy #1:	19	—
Convoy #2:	33	—
Air Landing:	93	—
TOTAL:	312	163

NOTE: Total does not include 21 Luftwaffe factors available on each daylight turn. German convoys begin landing turn 2 or later. German Air Landing units come in at captured airfields.

Unlike the German player, the Commonwealth player has little chance of reinforcing his scattered commands. The only way he can shift troops around is by using the coastal steamer to transfer one battalion between the ports. The reinforcing groups which come on later in the game will not arrive in

time to affect the defense. The Commonwealth player is thus fated to do battle in isolated combat groups.

On paper, therefore, the Commonwealth player has little hope of holding the island in the face of his opponent's high mobility and two-to-one superiority. The airborne attacker's dream appears to have come true in *AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE.*

This advantage often creates a cocksure attitude which closely resembles that held by General Kurt Student, commander of the German forces in the real air assault on Crete. In May, 1941, Student produced an imaginative and daring plan of attack which resulted in the wholesale slaughter of the parachute army. The island fell, but the Commonwealth forces pulled a Dunkirk-like evacuation. The heavy German losses convinced Adolf Hitler that airborne assaults were foolhardy ventures, and he forbade his generals to launch any major combat jumps for the remainder of the war.

A German player who prepares to play *CRETE* with a similar disposition will suffer an equally disastrous fate. Although the Commonwealth player is weaker and less mobile than the airborne army, he has the bite of a wounded lion cornered in his own den.

I. Defending Crete—

The Commonwealth forces are already divided into specific brigade groups. The two easternmost groups, those at Retimo and Heraklion, have powerful combat units but are not large enough to fight their way towards the main army at Suda. Maleme, in the far west, can be cut off by even a moderately capable German player. The "main army", spread out over the Suda sector, has only six strong battalions; its other units are one-factor battalions and non-combat service troops.

In order to win, the defender must either hold all three airfields at the end of the eighth turn or eliminate 75 victory points of Germans while evacuating 80 victory points of his own forces. The Commonwealth player should resign himself to losing at least one airfield: German air power and reinforcements are strong enough to decisively outweigh the defenders in any single sector.

The defense of Crete, therefore, becomes a matter of bleeding the German airborne forces, fighting a strong rear guard action, and getting out with enough units to win. A bitter struggle to the end for the airfields will give the Germans a victory by wasting the Commonwealth's few good units and leaving the escape routes unguarded.

The bloodletting can be accomplished by a vicious counterattack when German forces drop from the skies and again on the turn after they have landed. When the Germans come down they are scattered and disorganized; individual companies and headquarters detachments are easy targets. At the rate of two victory points per company eliminated and seven per headquarters destroyed, the Commonwealth's tally rapidly rises with the German death toll.

German headquarters units are prime targets for the Commonwealth attacks and for the defending artillery units. When the Germans attack, Commonwealth artillery should be directed against the weak headquarters (1-1-4) units in an attempt to eliminate or retreat them. Besides their high victory point value, the headquarters are essential to the formation of the concentrated German battalions. These battalions are formed by stacking a headquarters with four companies and substituting a battalion counter worth up to 10 factors. Two concentrated battalions can stack for a maximum of 20 factors. On the other hand, without the airborne headquarters, the German units become merely a collection of companies with a maximum of 12 factors in a stack.

A. Suda Bay—

The most important defensive sector is Suda Bay. This is where the bulk of the Commonwealth non-combatant units are initially deployed. Each of the 0-0-2 service units is worth five victory points, the same as a Commonwealth headquarters or infantry battalion. There are 16 service units on Crete, nine of them in Suda. If all 16 were evacuated, the 80 point victory total would be reached without withdrawing a single combat unit. The more service units the Commonwealth evacuates, the more combat units they can leave behind to kill paratroops.

The key to Suda is the port and the hills overlooking the harbor. If the Germans choose the landing area nearest Suda port, they can cut off the escape routes to the south and eliminate the harbor as an evacuation port. The defense which is suggested in the *CRETE* game booklet (Figure II) is an open invitation to the Germans to take this option and transform Suda into a trap for the Commonwealth.

A strong defense of Suda can force the German player into diverting the bulk of his airpower and reinforcements to prevent the Suda force from escaping. The outnumbered, slow-moving defender can thus force his highly mobile opponent into fighting a battle dictated by the Commonwealth.

The Suda defense can be strengthened through the addition of miscellaneous units provided to the Commonwealth commander. The 4-2-2 light anti-aircraft battery and the 1-1-7 light tank unit will give the Suda force the extra power it needs to launch effective counterattacks. The mobile flak gun can keep pace with a withdrawal and limit the effect of the German airpower. The light tank will subtract one from the die in any attack (this is equivalent to a shift in the combat table of one column in the attacker's favor). The weak infantry units from the miscellaneous group can be used to guard the back door of Suda, and the Royal Engineer detachment can blow up the port and bridges as the Commonwealth retreats.

Figure III is an example of a strong Suda defense incorporating the miscellaneous units. The anti-aircraft batteries are positioned to provide an optimum coverage of the interior, both to limit German air power and to increase the dispersion of the paratroops. (Each anti-aircraft gun adds one to the scatter die roll of each German unit as it comes down. Anti-aircraft guns also halve the value of German bombers and force the Germans to use two strafing planes instead of one to interdict a road.)

The port is covered by three flak positions: the *HMS York* in the harbor, the battery on the hills just north of the town of Katokhori, and the light flak unit adjacent to Suda. Although the *York* normally will be sunk on the first turn, the other two

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FIGURE II: Suggested Defense of Suda-Maleme and sample Attack as presented in *AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE* game booklet.

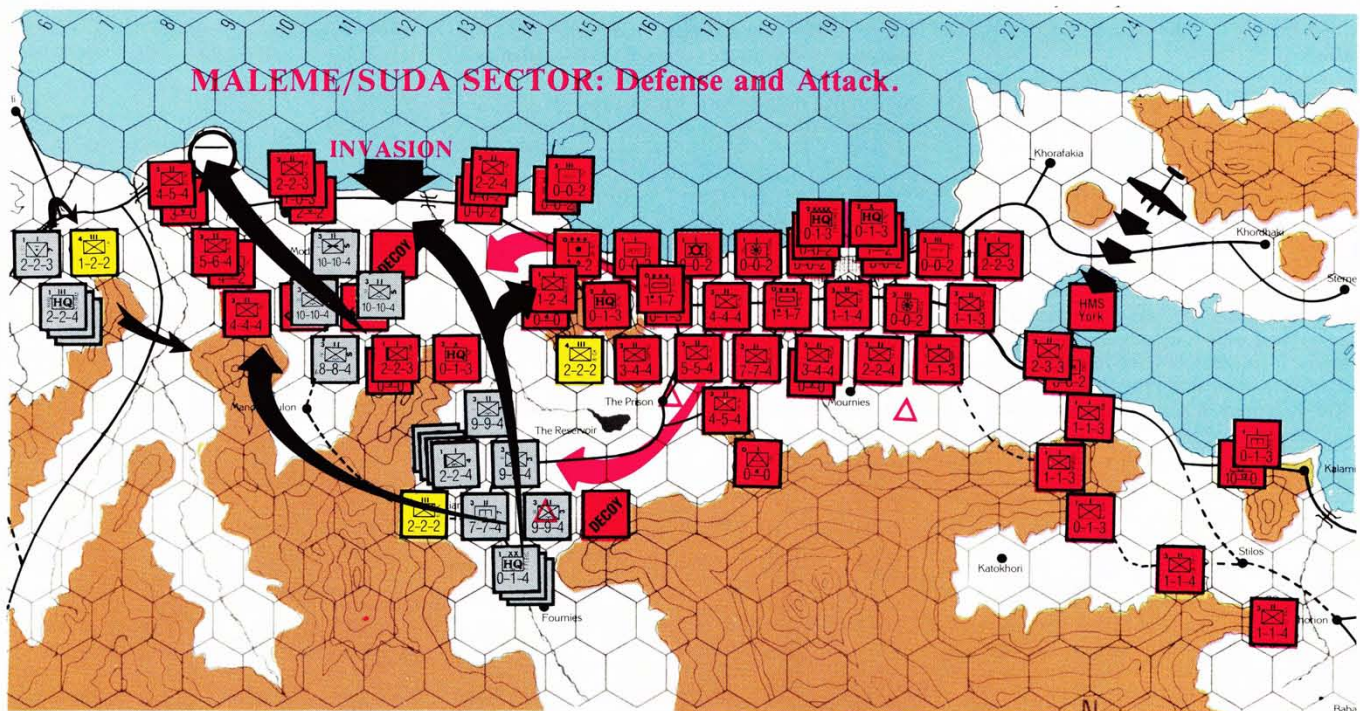MALEME/SUDA SECTOR: Defense and Attack.

INVASION

FIGURE III: Sample strong Suda Defense.

positions probably will remain hidden to the Germans and thus still cover the port.

As long as at least one of the anti-aircraft units is covering it, the Germans will need most of their air factors to neutralize the port. Even then, there are still two chances out of six on the bombardment table that the port will remain operational. The Commonwealth can evacuate 14 stacking points worth of headquarters and services units (some of which are three stacking points, others of which are only one stacking point) from Suda during turn eight if the Germans have not neutralized the port. This would mean that 35 of the 80 victory points the defender needs could be evacuated. If the port is still in operation on the next possible turn of evacuation, turn 12, another 25 points could make it out.

The Commonwealth army should not stay around Suda sector if the port has been neutralized for turn eight; the defender should immediately begin moving south towards the Georgeopolis sector and the southern evacuation road. This move will force the Germans to drop their reinforcements in front of the Commonwealth army as a blocking force. Although these paratroopers can slow the retreat, they are weak and can be beaten back by the stronger battalions of the Commonwealth army.

A German seaborne landing to cut off the retreat would have to arrive at Georgeopolis. This is a very risky proposition for the attacking player. The beach defense guns which should be placed in this area (See Figure IV) would get a good shot at any convoy which makes it to the beaches. The easternmost coast gun is deployed to shell targets on the Retimo beaches as well as those at Georgeopolis. To neutralize these guns, the Germans would have to divert the whole Luftwaffe on the turn the convoy is slated to arrive. Placing a decoy among the real
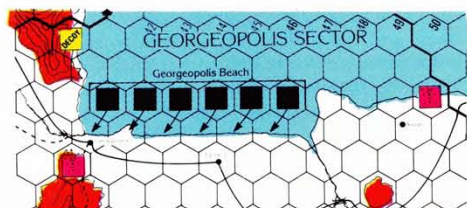

FIGURE IV: The Coast guns at Georgeopolis sector.

guns in this sector will further dissipate the available German air power.

If a convoy attempts to hit the beaches in a daylight turn, the Convoy Table is broken down into three even chances: half of the force reaching the beaches, none of the force landing, and all of the force arriving. A night convoy has an even poorer chance of reaching the coast than a daylight invasion. Moreover, the coast guns cannot be neutralized unless the Luftwaffe was extremely lucky on the previous daylight turn. Although the guns are halved at night, they still have a one-third chance of eliminating each invading unit.

By defending Suda and preparing for a southern evacuation, the Commonwealth player can force the Germans to waste their airpower against the port and the beach guns. Instead of using their reinforcements against an airfield or in conjunction with their already powerful forces, the German must send these extra companies in unsupported in order to stall the retreat. This course of action is forced upon the Germans because they cannot afford to let the Commonwealth army escape.

This diversion of air, sea, and paratroop forces will leave the airfield assault groups on their own against strong Commonwealth defenses.

B. The Airfields—

The Commonwealth player is required to position his troops around the three airfields. Each of these brigade-sized battlegroups is strong enough to match the initial enemy drop. The Germans will have tremendous difficulty, especially against Retimo and Heraklion, unless they are substantially bolstered by the Luftwaffe and other reinforcements.

The artillery, tanks and strong battalions in these two sectors can form very effective killer packs which can strike against the initially disorganized paratroopers.

Retimo should be defended from a position in front of the airstrip (See Figure V). A drop behind the Commonwealth lines will either drift into the sea or be pushed into the surf by a strong counterattack. Since there are no flak guns designated to defend Retimo, the anti-aircraft unit which is available for free set up should be placed here.

The forward defense forces the Germans to land away from their objective, giving the Commonwealth player more time to react and room to maneuver. The Greek regiments are placed on rough terrain (doubled on the defense) ahead of the main line to further disrupt the German drop pattern. The lone Greek unit near Retimo town is placed to protect the road junction and the Georgeopolis guns which are slightly to the west of the town.
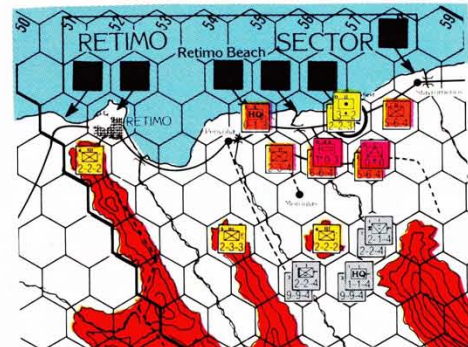

FIGURE V: Sample Defense and Attack at Retimo.

A similar defense is illustrated in Figure VI for Heraklion. The port is an important position for the defender to maintain. Like Suda, its dock workers can evacuate up to 30 victory points on each night turn, beginning with turn eight. The truck unit (0-0-6) is placed there for evacuation points.

Heraklion port is an excellent position for the coastal steamer. If the Heraklion defense has done well, a battalion can be shipped from there to nearby Retimo or even to Suda. This extra battalion can be a powerful factor in stalling the German advance.
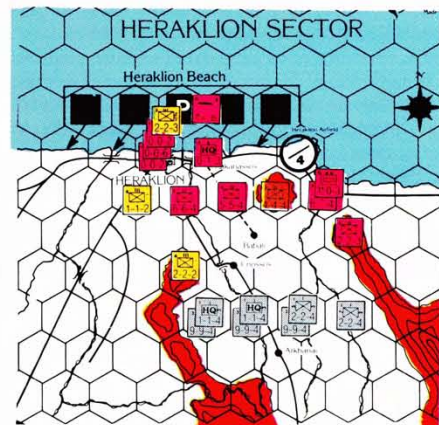
FIGURE VI: Sample Defense and Attack at Heraklion.

Maleme (See Figure VII) is defended a little differently than its sister airfields. The artillery and anti-aircraft units are placed on the overlooking hills both to control the airfield and to add firepower to local counterattacks. A light tank (1-1-7) has been added from the miscellaneous force to assist in the counterattacks (unlike the heavy tanks, they don't break down).

A coast gun is situated on the peninsula to the north of the airfield so it can cover both Kisamos Bay and Maleme beaches. The non-combat units which begin in the Maleme sector are placed along the western edge where the Greek regiment can help escort them off the south edge of the map. If nothing else, these units will cause the Germans to divert a few companies from the Maleme battle. Unless these noncombat units are stopped, the Commonwealth will gain 21 victory points worth of evacuated units.

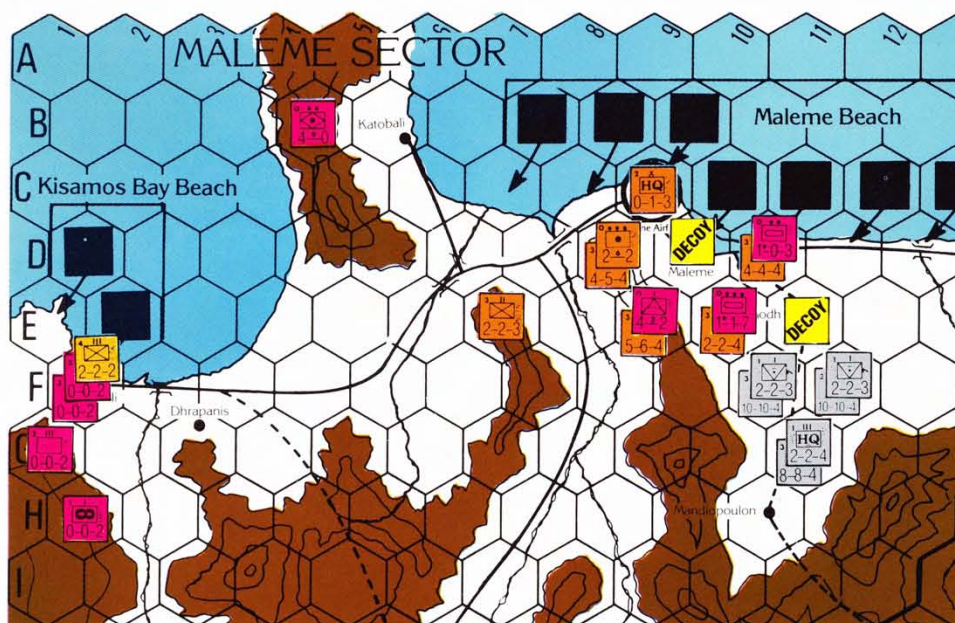FIGURE VII: Sample Defense and Attack at Maleme.German Glider Battalion is being used at Suda instead of Maleme. Commonwealth non-combat units are positioned to move towards southern escape road.

C. General Tactics—

The defenses which are illustrated in this article are designed to force the Germans to land away from their objectives. The farther away the Germans land, the more time the Commonwealth will have to maneuver and fight. Time is the German's enemy; each turn gives the Commonwealth player another chance to eliminate paratroopers and move closer to the evacuation roads. When faced with these defenses, a close-assault by the Germans onto their objectives will result in a severe disruption of their forces and an unacceptable casualty rate.

The first turn air drop is the crucial period in the Maleme-Suda battle. No matter where the Germans land, at least a few headquarters and companies will be scattered about. Although the Commonwealth forces are only able to move one hex on the first turn, they should still be able to hit some of the Germans.

The headquarters should be hit as hard as possible; six-to-one odds or better will practically assure their annihilation. The scattered airborne infantry companies are also excellent targets, but are of secondary importance if their headquarters are vulnerable to Commonwealth attacks.

Once the Germans have been buffeted about by flak guns, drift combat and early counterattacks, the Commonwealth can begin to solidify Suda's defenses. The most difficult threat to counter is a German jump into the heart of Suda. By placing the heavier defense battalions (7-7-4 and 3-3-4) close to Suda port, the Commonwealth should still be able to protect the harbor. Headquarters and non-combat units should be moved to within two hexes of the port, preferably to the southern side.

A German assault which lands in the relatively safe western valleys below the reservoir will give the battalions there one or two chances to gang up on any disorganized airborne units. The Greeks on the sector border can help constrict any German moves to link up with the Maleme group, at least for a turn or two, and the Commonwealth can form a defensive line to slowly fall back on Suda port. If they keep their artillery behind Commonwealth lines, they can move and fire it without hindrance from German units.

As the western force withdraws on Suda, the inner Suda group can move in the direction of the Georgeopolis passes. The whole army will then become a mobile Napoleonic "square", always moving and fending off the fast moving enemy units, while sheltering its noncombatants inside.

If the Luftwaffe has neutralized Suda port, preventing the Commonwealth from evacuating on turn eight, the "square" should keep moving as fast as possible into Georgeopolis, leaving the engineer detachment to blow up the port and stop the Germans from bringing in convoys.

By staying within the "square", the mobile light flak gun can reduce German road interdiction and combat airpower. The artillery and light tank should be directed toward the front of the "square" to give the leading units more attack power.

The Maleme force is basically a suicide detachment. Once the German assault battalions have been formed, the defenders must retreat into the hills above the airfield. From a line here they can control the airstrip, especially if the light flak gun is still operational. Two battalions can stack with the 4-2-2 flak unit, forcing the Germans either to launch an all-out attack, or to waste a number of planes each turn attempting to neutralize it.

If the 4-5-4 and 5-6-4 New Zealand battalions stack with the flak gun on the Maleme hills, together they will have 22 defense factors. In order to succeed, an all-out attack will require odds of at least three-to-one. The Germans will have to bring in armor and artillery from the convoys, as well as several units from the mountain division to strengthen the airborne forces sufficiently for the assault. Although the defenders will ultimately perish, the hill defense will tie down a large number of German units for several turns.

The wave of paratroops which hits Heraklion and Retimo on turn three presents the Commonwealth with its best possible chance to kill German units. Neither airborne group is strong enough to grab an airfield on its own. The Commonwealth player can go on the offensive against these groups until the Germans are reinforced. They can shove the Germans even farther from their objectives by hunting down their dispersed companies on turns three and four.

The presence of German reinforcements in Heraklion will determine whether the Commonwealth tries to evacuate by sea or overland. A quick offensive can swing the paratroops away from either or both of the evacuation roads.

Retimo offers an interesting mobile option to the Commonwealth. If Maleme falls, the Commonwealth derives little benefit from holding Retimo. Rather than evacuating like the Heraklion group, Retimo's Australian brigade can march to the Georgeopolis sector to support the Suda evacuation.

The Commonwealth player should always keep in mind the better part of valor: if one airfield falls, don't waste troops on the other two. The sooner the Commonwealth's 80 evacuation points are taken off, the easier it is for him to maneuver and eliminate German units.

D. Reinforcements—

The handful of units which comes in on turn eight and 16 has three uses: to secure evacuation roads, to be evacuated as victory points (a total of 26 points) or to help kill off the extra German units needed for victory.

The turn eight battalion can hold the Georgeopolis road open or can come in behind an enemy airborne roadblock at one of the other sectors. The turn 16 group will rarely have any effect on play, but if the game is still in progress, it can push the Commonwealth over the edge to victory. The best targets for this group are the weak German airborne companies (2-1-4 and 2-2) which cannot be used to form battalions.

II. An Airborne Thunderbolt—

The German player still has the opportunity to enjoy humiliating his enemy with a daring, well-coordinated assault. A capable Commonwealth player can make the German task extremely difficult, though not necessarily impossible.

The first thing the German player should realize is that the game probably will not last more than eight to twelve turns. If an airfield is not taken by turn eight, the game is obviously over since the defender has fulfilled his victory conditions. The game can still be over on turn eight unless the Germans have prevented the Commonwealth from withdrawing through the two ports. An unhindered naval withdrawal would total 65 evacuation victory points; another three battalions from the board or reinforcement chart, and the Commonwealth player is home free.

The second factor the Germans must, unfortunately, consider is that losing 75 points to casualties is very easy. A few unlucky die rolls on the first drop can scatter headquarters and individual companies all over creation, making them easy prey to the enemy counterattack. Even a poor Commonwealth player will realize that the time to deal with an invasion is on this first turn, and he will jump on these companies as viciously as he can. Each convoy which sinks or is blown away by coast guns will cost heavily in casualties (13 points for convoy number one, 25 for convoy number two), and the weak companies which drop on turns six and seven (each worth ten points) are highly vulnerable to Commonwealth reaction.

So where does this leave the vaunted airborne assault? Faced with heavy losses and a limited amount of time to stop the enemy withdrawal, what does the German player do?

One thing the German player should not do is take the safe route. The attack outlined in the CRETE game booklet (Figure II) will help minimize losses and take Maleme, but will leave the Commonwealth free to evacuate from Suda sector. Furthermore, this approach requires commiting the entire Luftwaffe against Suda port on turns six and seven in the hope of knocking it out. Such a plan places the whole German game at the mercy of one or two uncertain die rolls, neither of which is guaranteed to neutralize the port. The German player could do with a little more calculated daring.

"Audacity, audacity, always audacity" was one of the key maxims of Frederick the Great, Germany's greatest soldier. An airborne assault must become the modern embodiment of Frederick's 18th century phrase.

A. Suda—

The objective for the German player is not an airfield—it is the Commonwealth army. To get at this army, the Germans must jump right down its throat with a massive assault into central Suda. The Engineer battalion, the reinforced paratroop regiment, and the spare companies which are allocated for Suda should be augmented by the powerful glider battalion. Once they are all formed on the ground, their 55 combat factors will overwhelm the defenders. The total Suda defense force, much of it weak in offensive power, is only 46 factors when compacted. The tight German drop pattern shown in Figure VIII will cut this defending force in two.
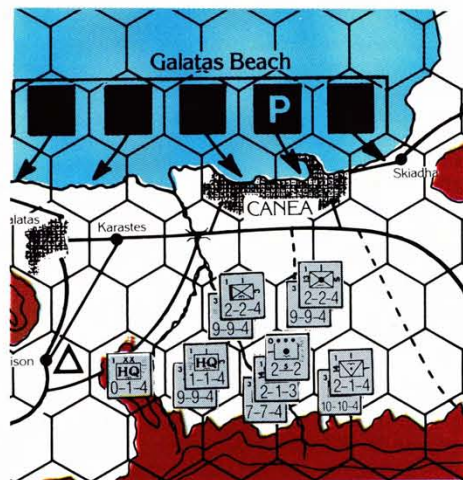

FIGURE VIII: Sample German close-assault drop on Middle Suda Sector. Drop is designed to form strong combat stacks as close to Suda harbor as possible while staying out of the sea. Glider Battalion is dropped on far right (10-10-4) as an anchor.

Figure VIII's suggested jump pattern puts six stacking points in each group: a full battalion with either a headquarters or a combat company (two companies go in with the smaller engineer group). The glider force is dropped as the eastern anchor because it is the least likely to scatter. According to the diagram provided with the game, the other units will drift in a northeasterly fashion. This six battalion-equivalent drop should enable at least two or three battalions to form up at the start of turn two. Few companies will land in a hex alone against the Commonwealth units and will thus have a better chance of survival against drift combat and the enemy counterattack.

The Germans can begin pushing on Suda port immediately, thus catching some of the noncombat units still outside the port. The attack should be sustained by airpower for two turns to keep Suda port within German striking distance and to cut the Georgeopolis road. Reinforcements arriving on turns six and/or seven can be dropped just below the port to link up with the main force if necessary. This drop will further sever the Commonwealth's escape route and will minimize casualties among the new German units.

This jump into the lion's den will cut the Commonwealth army in half, and, against a defense such as the one outlined in the game booklet (Figure II), will cost very little in casualties. A defender who expects this attack will be able to check the assault, but the combination of tight German forces and the concentrated Luftwaffe should capture Suda for the Germans. At the very least, this attack will prevent

the Commonwealth from evacuating more than a handful of units from Suda port.

The jump pattern in Middle Suda can be varied to land the Germans a hex or two farther to the west or to put an individual glider company in each stack and give a firmer base to the assault. By attacking too close to the port, the Germans risk dropping into the sea or drifting onto the port city itself, either of which will cause unnecessary losses.

B. The Airfield Assaults—

The German player must take at least one airfield, even if he is wrecking the Suda Bay defenses. As the instructors at jump school in Fort Bragg, N.C., used to say, unless an airborne force is supported within 48 hours it will be doomed. This idea holds true for the Germans on Crete.

Maleme is normally the easiest airfield to take. The drop which is suggested in the game booklet (Figure II) is probably the safest and most effective drop possible. The diversion of the glider battalion to Suda, however, will necessitate a tighter pattern to conserve force among the remaining German battalions (See Figure VII). These German battalions should head straight for the airfield with full Luftwaffe support as soon as planes can be spared from Suda.

An early landing at Kisamos (just west of Maleme) and another at Maleme beach should give the airborne group the extra power necessary to secure the airfield. The convoys should be planned for the first five turns of the game to maximize their availability. If these forces are not sufficient, the turn six and seven airborne groups will have to be committed at Maleme instead of Suda. The flak guns above the airstrip should be neutralized by the Luftwaffe for one turn to allow artillery from the mountain division to land. These artillery units should give the Germans enough power to assault the flak positions that are within range of the airfield.

Retimo is probably the worst death trap of all for the Germans. With only two reinforced battalions at their disposal, they are almost incapable of an offensive. If reinforcements are available, they can strengthen the assault, but the availability of reinforcements indicates that Maleme has already fallen, so why waste them in a sideshow attack against a superfluous airfield?

The most advantageous use of the Retimo force is in blocking the evacuation roads. The drop at Retimo should be far enough from the Commonwealth positions to give the Germans time to form up (See Figure V). This landing still threatens the airfield, and the Germans can steal a march for the roads. Air interdiction and the necessity of holding the airfield will slow the defender's reaction against this maneuver. (The Commonwealth cannot afford to uncover an airfield until the Germans have seized one.)

Heraklion holds two objectives for the Germans: the port and the airfield. The port must be either taken or neutralized in the same fashion as Suda port. Given the chances of air neutralization, an attack is the German's best bet. The Luftwaffe is more efficiently used for a one or two turn assault on the port than in an unsure neutralization bombardment. The three reinforced German battalions in this force could take the port and still contest the evacuation roads.

The air assault shown in Figure VI is designed to keep the Germans relatively intact so they can choose their objective. A drop closer to the port would make a move on the city easier but would not threaten the airfield and could in fact lead to heavier first drop losses.

Should the Maleme assault peter out or should the Germans want a change of pace, they can go all-out for Heraklion field with planes, convoys, and

airborne reinforcements. Such an offensive would force the Commonwealth to give up the port in order to defend the more crucial airfield.

C. Reinforcements—

The attacker has four types of reinforcements: Luftwaffe, airborne, convoy and airlanding units. The aircraft are a reinforcement in the sense that they can be continually shifted around the board to strike wherever the need is greatest.

The Luftwaffe has two jobs in *AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE*: to hinder Commonwealth evacuation and to hammer the defender like an airborne artillery group. They can severely curtail evacuation by interdicting the road network ahead or in the middle of an enemy column, or by attempting to neutralize the ports. Although bombardment against Heraklion and Suda puts too much hope in a die roll, unless the German ground units can strike at the ports on turn seven the planes must go in.

The flying artillery value of the Luftwaffe enables the Germans to put tremendous pressure on a single hex. Even in the face of anti-aircraft fire, at least 10 attack factors can be added to any single attack. Neutralizing flak positions before the bombers aid a land attack is often a waste of planes. Even with the entire 21 air factors going after one position, there is still a relatively good chance it will emerge unscathed or be back in action next turn.

The airborne reinforcements which enter on turns six and seven, each worth ten attack factors, can turn the tide against a reluctant airfield or can bottle up a retreating column long enough for the ground forces to catch up. The favorite bottlestopper drops are around the pass at Petres in Georgeopolis and on the roads leading off the board from the other sectors. Ten attack factors of paratroopers coupled with the 21 Luftwaffe factors should stall or break the head of most retreating columns. These companies must be supported within a turn or two or they will be overwhelmed by the Commonwealth.

The convoys are dependent upon their intended destination, the discovery and neutralization of Commonwealth coast guns, and the luck of the die. The German player cannot put all his hopes on the convoys, but he should try to get them in as safely as possible. Convoy landings should be scheduled for the second or third turn after parachutists have hit an area to ensure that coast guns have been searched out and destroyed. Although this ties up a few companies and perhaps some planes, if the convoy makes it past the debilitating die roll the effort will be rewarded.

The armor, artillery and infantry of the convoys are even more powerful than the airborne reinforcements. An intact convoy can put unbearable pressure on a defensive position, especially if it is used in concert with the Luftwaffe.

The airlanding units of the mountain division are dependent upon German control of the airfields, and thus come in only after the climax of the battle. A Commonwealth player who is staunchly holding nearby ground can be heavily plastered by the airlanding artillery. If the Commonwealth army is already on the run, the Germans should bring in the 8-8-4 infantry in an effort to catch them. The airlanding units will not be of any use against a withdrawing enemy unless the paratroopers can pin or stall them.

III. Summary—

The German player has the opportunity to create a true lightning attack. Even when faced with a well directed defense, a decisive airborne onslaught can end the game in a German victory with-

INVASION OF MALTA

An Operational Analysis of What Might Have Been

by   John D. Burtt

Military operations are fickle creatures. Invariably, they are planned down to the last roll of toilet paper, but once the action starts, they hardly ever follow the script. The deviations come either as a result of poor planning, enemy counteraction, or just plain fate. Some historical examples:

Operation Citadel—Hitler's offensive against the Kursk Salient, 1943. This operation was a disaster because enemy intelligence was far better than the Wehrmacht's. The Soviets knew every step the Germans were going to take.

Operation Cobra—the Allied breakout from Normandy, 1944. This offensive started out with a massive airstrike designed to disrupt the German defenses prior to Bradley's advance. It worked perfectly; the bombers made a shambles of the resistance—it also cratered the landscape so badly that the lead units could hardly move.

Operation Thunderbolt—the Israeli raid on Entebbe, 3 July, 1976. A near perfect operation, despite having its objectives defined in terms of minutes instead of days or hours. (The commandos had two minutes to gain control of the hostages.) Good intelligence, excellent planning, and precise execution pulled it off. By comparison, witness the Egyptian debacle at Nicosia, Cyprus just this year.

In Avalon Hill's game, *INVASION OF MAL-TA, 1942,* gamers are given the opportunity, perhaps more than in any other game, to plan out a complete operation. They must map out strategy, then attempt to execute their assault, coordinating land and air units, to achieve their set goals in a short period of time. Or, as the Allied player, plan out a defense that will deny the enemy his goals and cause him grievous casualties trying.

What is called for is an analysis of the situation from both sides in order to create plans with a realistic (special emphasis on this word, all you dreamers out there) chance of success. This article will deal with that analysis.

I. ALLIED OPERATIONS—

For the Allies, the main disadvantages are 1) no reinforcements, 2) growing enemy strength, and 3) enemy air power—oh, for a few squadrons of Spitfires! The main advantages are time and artillery. In order to make best use of these two elements, a fair idea of what the Axis might do is needed. The best way to obtain this information is to plan an invasion à la Section II.

Since his paratroops fall first, they should be the initial consideration. Axis airborne units will probably have the following objectives: (Note—these goals are chosen from the Axis point of view)

1. *An Airfield:* The capture and opening of *any* airfield is important in order that reinforcements start arriving quickly. Until the cavalry starts showing up, the paratroopers are on their own and must bear the brunt of the fighting—and casualties— which plays right into the Allied victory conditions.

2. *A Beach:* This is a corollary of number 1. If the Assault Convoy runs into a heavily occupied beach, or a maelstrom of coastal defense fire, the airborne units again stand alone. Thus an effort against the selected landing site and covering batteries can be expected.

3. *A Port:* A necessity by turn 12 if the Axis want to keep rolling. Since the port of Valletta is a bastion (defenders tripled), protected on five sides by water (no combat across water hexsides) and on the other side by Floriana Bastion, Birzebbugia stands out like a sore thumb.

With these goals in mind, the next task will be to meet the Italian landing forces. A decision on a potential landing site is necessary to save the defenders from running all over the island. The four possibilities are:

1. *North Beach.* With only 5 Beach Landing Boxes (BLB) and rough terrain blocking quick passage to all the goodies, this is a lousy place to start a war. (Unless the Italian commander wants to land unopposed . . .) The beach's only plus is that its BLBs are in direct line-of-sight (LOS) of only one possible coastal defense battery.

2. *St. Paul's Bay Beach.* Seven BLBs and clear terrain in which to deploy troops. If the Gargur Hills nearby (the key to the whole area) are breached, the capitol comes under attack. The beach is covered by three battery positions but has *the* prime drop site right next door. All this makes St. Paul's Bay an excellent possibility for invasion.

3. *Western Beach.* Again, 7 BLBs, but a lot of rough terrain for defenders to hide in. Coastal defense artillery can only reach two of the seven landing sites by direct LOS. The Western Command Area is a possible drop site and is close to Luqa Airfield and Birzebbugia. Another good choice.

4. *Valletta Beach.* The biggie! Landing in the 7 BLBs on this beach puts the enemy right in the middle of everything. A sweet prize if garnered, but the concentration of coastal defense batteries on this sector makes it a potential disaster. Probably only for those Axis players wanting a quick game.

These observations, in conjunction with the knowledge that the Axis forces will have to be coordinated, can be used to advantage in the initial placement of the Allied units. There are 3 basic types to consider.

A. Antiaircraft Units—

These units have the unenviable task of halving Axis air capabilities and scattering/eliminating Axis airborne units. The initial placement of these units isn't important—it's EVERYTHING! With only three mobile batteries, the goals must be met by the set-up.

Ideally, the Allied goal would be to greet the blossoming parachutes with a drop zone modifier of at least +4 to insure a chance of a drop elimination.

A major obstacle to this dream is the restriction on flak battalion placement. Figure 1 shows the maximum area covered by these six units. A glance shows the entire southwest section of the island is either uncovered or covered solely by the light flak battalions. (Whose exact positioning makes them certain targets for a predrop pasting by friendly neighborhood bombers . . .) So, although Valletta is safe from a turn 1 coup, the rest of the island must be protected by the five heavy and three light flak batteries. Thinking about this tactical problem will surely drive gamers wild for years!

By assuming that the initial goal of the paratroopers will be an airfield, three fields stand out as obvious choices, Takali, Halfar, and Krendi. Of the three, Halfar is the best strategic target, being out of range of all flak battalions and close to the port of Birzebbugia. Krendi is within range of only the 32nd Light AA Battalion on Luqa, but the chances of its neutralization via bombardment are excellent. Takali is the weakest field, being isolated from the cover of any flak battalion except its own and virtually surrounded by possible drop sites; it is also the second largest field on the island, making it that much more desirable to the Axis. Of the three fields, Takali, then, will be most prone to capture early in the game. On the bright side, Takali *is* kind of stuck out in the boondocks, meaning the newly arrived Italians will have to cross most of Malta to reach their objectives.

Figure 2 shows a possible AA defense—the emphasis being placed upon denying the central portion of Malta from the Axis paratroopers. This should force the enemy to fall away from the prime objectives, allowing the defense time to organize and react. Note: An Axis commander is fully capable of dropping *anywhere* on Malta—the flak setup he falls into will tell him where he *should have* dropped!

Another viable option is the "flak trap," that is, ringing the suspected drop site with every battery that can be brought to bear. There are two problems with this option. The first is where to expect the initial drop. Guess right and the battle will be all but over before it starts; guess wrong and your flak batteries will sit where they are, virtually useless for

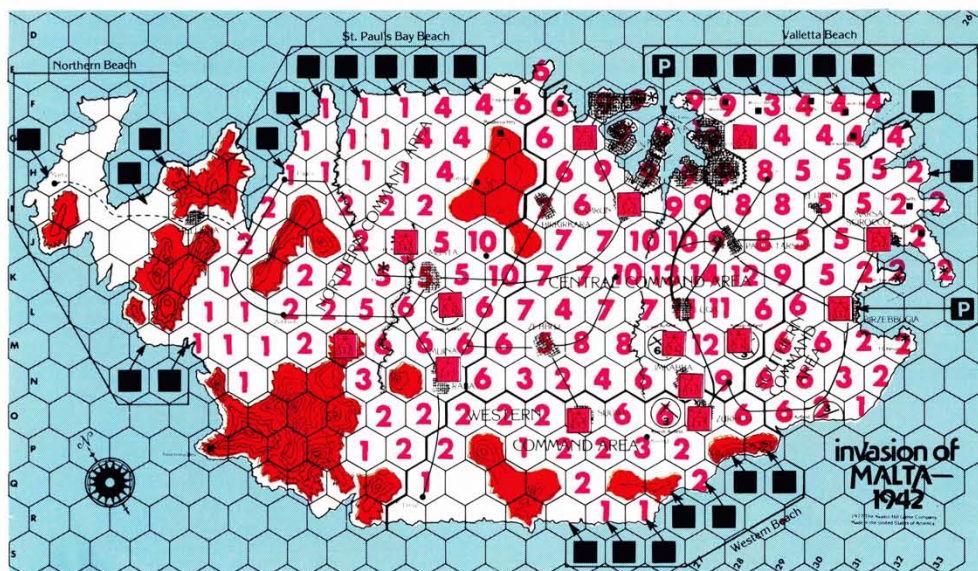**Figure 1:** Maximum area covered by AA battalions—a lot of holes!
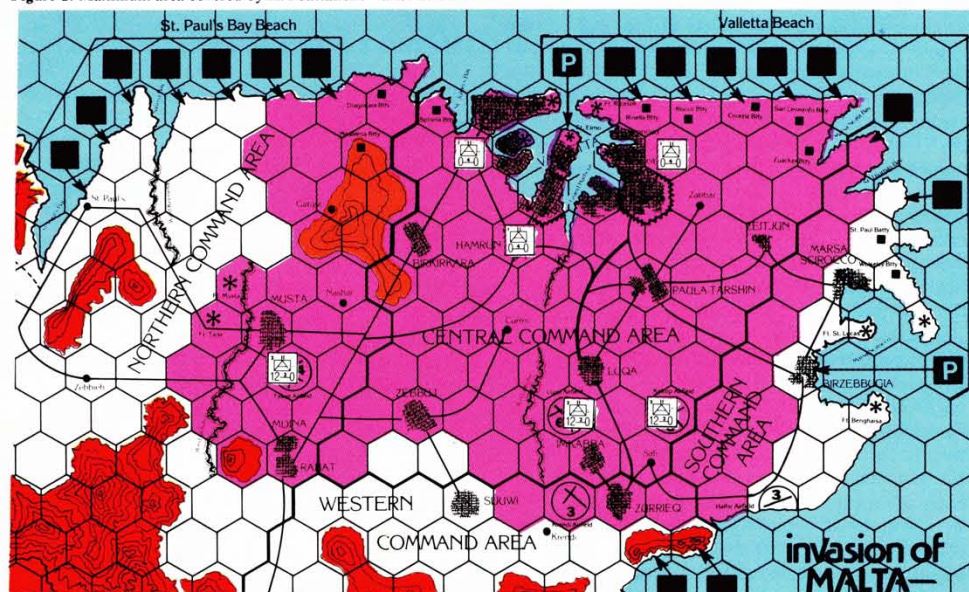
Figure 2: Possible AA deployment and prebombardment drop modifiers.

the duration. The second problem is what to do if you guess wrong. A tight Axis drop in the wrong place can put the Allies in a world of hurt! The potential for a wrong guess should be considered and planned for.

One final note on flak—PROTECT THE LIGHT BATTERIES!!! They are important. Not only are they the only mobile force available to stop air landing on captured fields, but their 12 fire factors used as artillery are crucial in the early going. Don't try to hold a field *closed* too long and allow these units to be cut off.

B. Coastal Defense Artillery—

Coastal defense artillery (CDA) is exceedingly powerful—a strength 3 CDA has a 50% chance of eliminating every unit in a given BLB. But their immobility makes them nearly a one shot defense weapon. (Unless the landings are on Valletta Beach where the sheer numbers of CDA batteries may overwhelm the Axis capability to destroy/neutralize them all . . .) The Allies can expect a strong paratroop effort against suspected CDA positions overlooking the landing site as well as air bombardment immediately beforehand. The batteries should be defended vigorously from land assault prior to the landing—but not to the extent that other vital targets are made vulnerable.

There are 14 CDA units and 19 possible locations to place them in. On the surface, it would appear that Valletta Beach is the only one of the four adequately covered and that careful placement of these units is an exercise in futility. There *are* a few things to consider—like placing the short range batteries in a central location to cover the maximum BLBs. But on the whole most of the placements are clear. Figure 3 shows a CDA deployment and a few LOSs which may not be immediately obvious.

The heavy CDAs (range = 24) are seemingly Very Important Pieces. Given a spotting unit, these batteries need no direct LOS to the target landing box. The catch is, of course, those spotting units. The Axis will expend considerable effort to knock off any defender they find on coastal beach hexes, so, without considerable luck (and a strategic attack or two) indirect CDA fire should not be depended upon. Of the four beaches, Western, with its rough terrain, stands to gain the most from the heavies. One note: There is an immediate urge to hide these four CDA units in Valletta under a strong flak blanket to protect them. But by putting them in battery positions on a beach, they also have direct LOS firing capability and are thus a double threat.
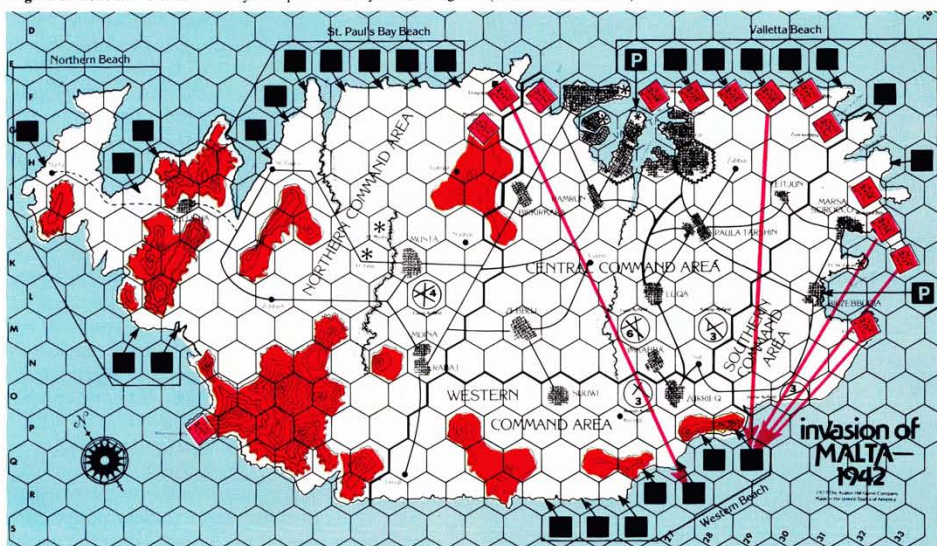
C. Infantry and Supporting Units—

Flak is preventive; CDA are defensive; the rest of the Allied units are active. Once the Axis are on Malta, the infantry and their supporting units must take over. They have to defend against a horde of enemy troops and not only keep them from taking the three main objectives, but inflict maximum airborne casualties as well.

As was stated before, a major Allied advantage is time and it's the infantry who must make the most of this advantage. There are two basic ways of doing the job. The first is the Allies inverted status at the start. The Axis cannot plan their attacks efficiently before their movement phase if they don't know what they'll be up against. Allied units should stay inverted until the last possible moment, or unless an opening for a surrounded counterattack shows itself. The second method is the "pin"—an Allied unit, by moving next to an Axis stack, effectively *pins* it. The enemy either attacks the unit(s) pinning it, or it doesn't attack at all during the turn. Pinning the Axis will force them to fall back to regroup or attack where they might not want to—either way it will delay them.

Figure 4: An Allied tactical "pin", defending Hamrun.

An example of a pin is shown in figure 4. The Italians are ready to hurl an attack against the city of Hamrun, the last defensive position before Floriana Bastion. The attack, if not countered, should be successful. (a 3-1 with a –1 modifier for the assault guns has a 5/6 chance of dislodging the defenders). By moving out from Valletta to the position indicated, HQ-Malta pins the assault guns and two strong battalions. These units must now attack the headquarters or not attack at all this turn—and Hamrun holds for another important turn.

Day 1 is a key to the Allied cause. Although restricted by the surprise rule (movement restricted to a single hex on turn 1), Allied defenders within range should pin the scattered airborne units and attack those they can achieve decent odds against. Counterattacks are vital during the day against the paratroops, especially the German Fallschirmjager battalions. Surrounded attacks, even at odds as low as 1-1, can wreak havoc on an already tight Axis turntable, by stalling linkups and destroying needed units. (Nail two battalions of German paratroopers and the Axis player will be staring at the possible premature withdrawal of his best units!)

Initial positioning is somewhat restricted as the defenders are split up among the four command areas. Some guidelines:

Figure 3: Coastal Defense Artillery set up and sneaky lines-of-sight. (it isn't all bad . . . .)

1. *Northern Command Area.* One unit on the rough terrain near Mellieha to cut off any northern landings and to be ready to move up to St. Paul's Bay. (best unit for this task is probably HQ-North) Other infantry battalions located near Takali (and in the Gargur Hills) in double positions, hoping for drop combat. One unit is placed directly on Takali to insure a reasonable defense. These NCA units are thus in a position to pin Axis paratroops if the initial drop is near Takali; or, if the drop is elsewhere, they are ready to defend St. Paul's Bay if necessary.

2. *Western Command Area.* One unit directly on Krendi Airfield and the others doubled and ready to move in any direction.

3. *Southern Command Area.* One unit on Halfar Airfield, the others doubled and ready to go where the action is when needed. If the Axis do land near Takali, these units will remain immobile as a reserve.

4. *Central Command Area.* Some weaker units deployed in and around Valletta to mask the location of the flak battalions. Units stationed on Luqa and Kirkop Airfields, the others in doubled positions ready to move. The CCA battalions should be placed near the area in which the main Axis thrust is expected. (near the NCA/CCA border if a drop is suspected near Takali, for example.)

The infantry support units definitely have their uses in the defense of Malta and their tactics are covered in the next few paragraphs:

1. Artillery—

The artillery regiment and the light flak batteries represent the second major advantage the Allies have early in the game—the Axis don't have any of note until the Followup Convoys begin to arrive. These units should be placed in position to support the immediate series of counterattacks against the paratroopers. Figure 5 shows one such initial placement—as before, the focal point is to help defend Takali.

While the artillery is invaluable during the Allied combat phase, it is during the Axis phase that these big units really do their stuff. In defensive fire, the artillery can concentrate on a *single unit* in a stack to push it out of an attack or destroy it. Priorities

depend upon the circumstances; choosing whether to shoot to kill or to reduce an attack is a judgement decision. Example: Figure 6 shows a position just prior to Axis combat. Two battles have been announced, a 4-1 against 2/RWK in Zebbuj and an 8-1 against 16f/RE. There are several possible shots for the massed artillery regiment: a 3-1 against the 7th Engineer Battalion, a 2-1 against either I/1 or III/2 (either of these shots, if successful, will lower the odds against 2/RWK, with the shot on the 7th having a 1/6 shot at killing the battalion), or a 4-1 against any of the three 185th battalions. (This last shot would be classed a kill shot as success would have little effect on the battle.)
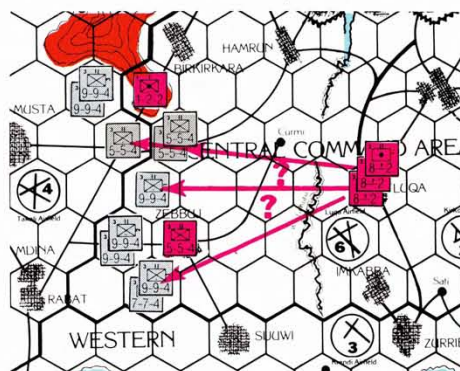

Figure 6: The Artillery Dilemma—what to shoot at . . .

Before the game, the Allied player should study the terrain of Malta and choose artillery positions for future turns. One particularly good position is shown in figure 7—the Kill Zone. This area must be crossed by the Axis on their drive to Birzebbugia if they drop anywhere but around Zeitjun. With the exception of the cities in the Zone, the Axis units will be undoubled and, if the Italian sea-born reinforcements are detained, the airborne troops will have to run the gauntlet—obviously a strong defensive effort should be made (given the chance) to keep the enemy in the Zone for as many turns as possible.

One very important rule: AS LONG AS THE AXIS HAVE PARADROP CAPABILITIES,

ARTILLERY UNITS SHOULD NEVER BE LEFT ALONE. It would probably pay the Axis to drop a couple Italian units behind the lines to attack these units if left vulnerable. Once the drop threat is over, the regiment should be concentrated for maximum effect. Given the fact that these units cannot be neutralized by air bombardment, they are the most valuable units on the island.

Figure 7: The "Kill Zone"—Artillery in defense against the drive on Birzebbugia.

2. Armor—

Armor is a nice weapon to have, especially if the other guy doesn't have any. With this in mind, these units should be placed where they can participate in the Day 1 counterattacks before the Axis antitank units can intervene. The reliability roll is just something the Allies will have to live with—a successful roll can effectively raise the odds of an attack with its –1 modifier.

The light armor unit should be heavily protected as it doesn't require a reliability roll and its long range allows it to move freely all over the island—keeping in mind, of course, that it can only enter rough terrain via road. Once the Axis pick up some artillery support, the light armor will be a certain target for defensive fire when used in attacks, so caution is recommended.

3. Beach/Fortress Companies—

These five units are primarily defensive in nature. The Beach companies are a good start in meeting the Italians on the beach and denying them beachheads—tantamount to delaying reinforcements as the followup convoys can only land on beachhead hexes. Western Beach, with its doubling rough terrain, is an ideal place to start these units, unless some other beach is suspected strongly. Fortress companies should be used to defend CDAs, with the secondary goal of moving to defend beaches if needed. Magdalena and Dragonara Batteries, overlooking St. Paul's Bay, are excellent starting points for both purposes.

4. Dummy Units—

These decoys should be used near key AA units to possibly divert Axis bombers. Another crucial use is on the beach hexes. Putting dummies on the beaches will force the Axis to respond madly, ferreting out the real enemy from the imaginary ones, trying to clean them up prior to the initial landings. His efforts should tip his hand concerning his landing site and allow the Allies to start their defensive reaction early. One note of caution: A wily Axis commander may pull the old "think-double think" against a staid defender by throwing all his attackers against one beach to clear it, then landing the Italians on a totally different beach . . . zot . . . .

Figure 5: Initial Artillery deployment. Main weapon in the Allied arsenal.
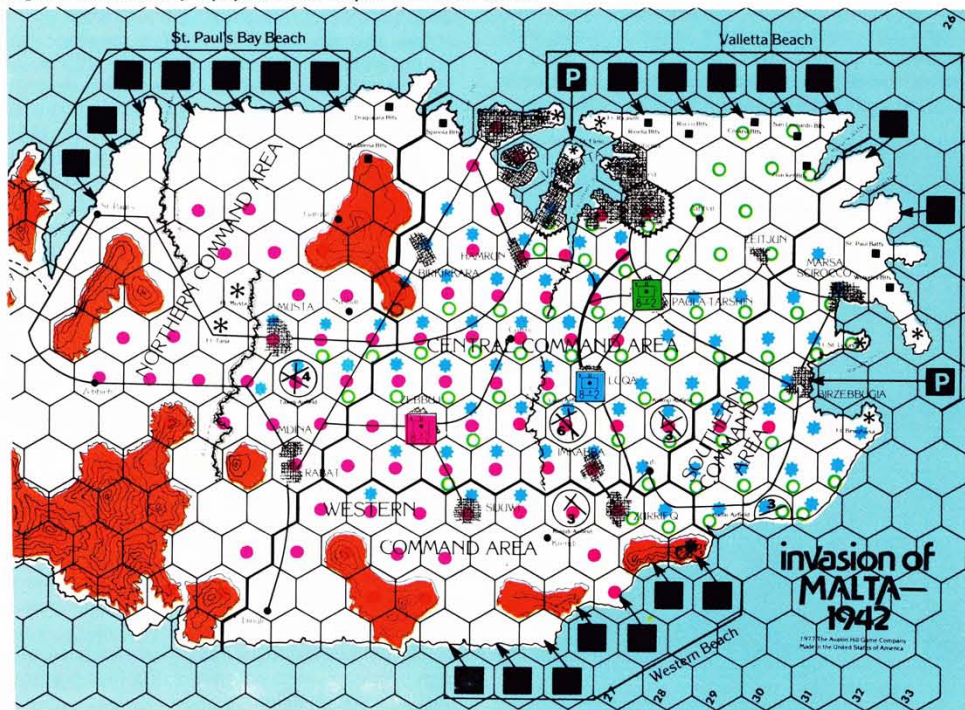
For the Allies, then, the tactics are basically "delay, disrupt, and survive", punctuated by counterattacks whenever possible. Serious consideration should be given to taking offensive action against the suspected beach just prior to the Assault Convoy's landing to throw the enemy on the defensive. Example: In figure 8, it is evening, Day 1. The struggle for the Gargur Hills is still in progress. The Allies can throw a kink into the Axis plans by massing their artillery and, with the light armor in support, attack the two Folgore battalions at 4-1. This attack, in combination with pinning action against other Axis forces in the area has an excellent chance of killing both Italian units or, at least, pushing them back to allow 2/KOMR to move into the vacated hex and contest any landing there—not to mention spotting for the heavy CDAs.
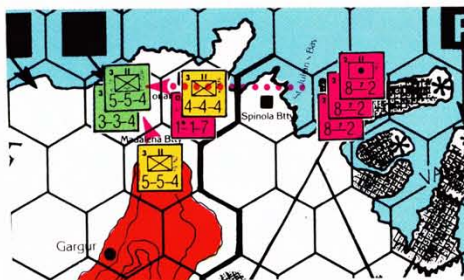
Figure 8: The Allied counterattack against the beach—a successful assault will put 2/KOMR on a potential landing site.

Once the swarm of Italians have landed, the defenders should fall back slowly to doubled positions supported by the artillery regiment and by smaller units to provide avenues of retreat in case of encirclement. However, even in the later turns, the defenders of Malta should be alert for any openings the Axis might leave—after several turns of retreating, an Axis commander might grow lax and leave some units exposed. An example is shown in figure 9. Here the weakened 7th Engineer Battalion has been left without antitank or artillery support. The Allies sortie from Paula-Tarshin and hit the three companies with a 5-1 assault. With the −1 modifier from the armor, chances are good the 7th will be just a memory and 21 points will be chalked up on the Allies side.
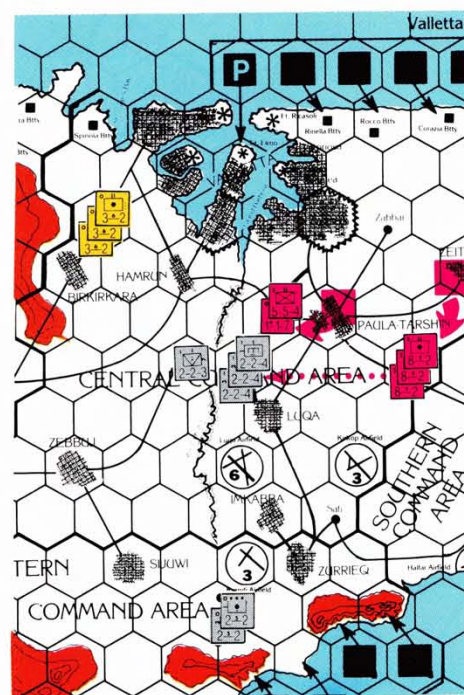
Figure 9: The Axis has left the weakened 7th Engr. without anti-tank or artillery support—result—one dead Fallschirmjager Battalion.

The one major consideration the Allies should keep in mind is their limited strength—a battalion lost is a battalion gone forever. If they try to defend too much too long, sooner or later the casualties are going to catch up with them and a major breakthrough will occur. The defenders will find themselves suddenly isolated away from the main enemy targets. But, by the same token, they can't afford to simply fall back to Birzebbugia and Valletta and hope for the best. The Axis drive must be contested all the way but a delicate balance must be drawn on whether to hold or fall back—there's no set criteria, so it's strictly a judgement call. One pitfall to try and avoid is allowing the strong battalions to try and defend untenable positions. Example: Figure 10a shows a position just before Axis combat. The 8/KO battalion has a way out of the city if forced to retreat. The next turn the position will be untenable as shown in figure 10b. The two German battalions can now attack A/26RA, forcing its retirement (or outright destruction) and then assault Zebbuj again with the remainder of the forces to have an excellent chance to kill off 8/KO. Even if the city holds out, the battalion is trapped by enemy zones of control, cutting his movement to a maximum of one hex into open terrain.
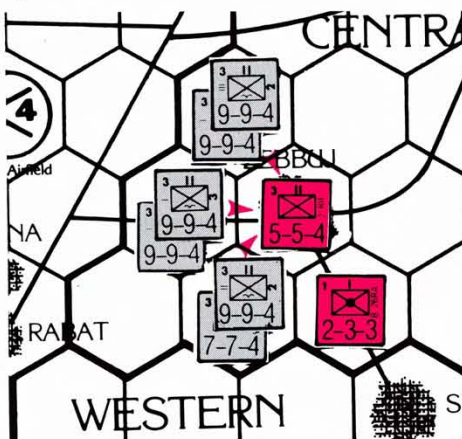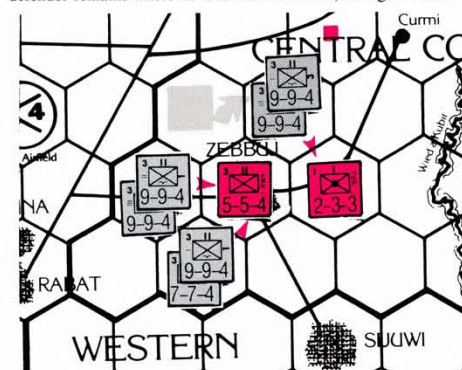

Figure 10: Attack and defense—
a) A German "bludgeon" attack against Zebbuj—an acceptable Allied defense as a retreat route is open for this turn
b) An untenable position stemming from 10a. If the Allied defender remains where he is to hold the town, he'll get nailed.

In general, though, the Allies defense of Malta will depend on what the Axis player cooks up. The defenders must be prepared to expect and counter anything that comes their way.

II. AXIS OPERATIONS—

Analysis of Axis operations is far more difficult as everything depends upon the set plan of battle. For the purposes of this article, a plan has been developed and explained to show the reasoning and thought behind each decision.

The first step in planning any offensive operation is the gathering of intelligence. Setting objectives and timetables without first studying the opposition is like a low odds attack in *STALINGRAD*—you might succeed but it would be pure luck. Innumerable operations have failed because of poor intelligence, a good example being operation Market-Garden. (What SS Panzer Divisions? ? ?) In *MALTA*, the numbers and strengths are given in the OoB, so all that's missing is their exact disposition—and a guess can be made at those with an analysis like that of Section I.

Time is *the* most pressing problem. All three objectives, Luqa Airfield, Valletta and Birzebbugia must be in Axis hands before the end of the fifth day (Turn 20) to allow for the four turn holding requirement. Despite the numerical superiority of the Axis on paper, it is a tough task. The voluntary combat rule will make things that much harder by forcing every important hex to be taken by combat. The old *STALINGRAD* trick of soaking off against strong positions, forcing a retreat or counterattack, won't work on the Isle of Malta.

The traps the Axis must avoid are numerous. To list just a few:

1. The beaches must be secured for the Assault Convoy *and kept secure*. A successful Allied counterattack against the established beachheads would spell total Axis disaster by cutting off the flow of reinforcement.

2. The Allied units must never be allowed to concentrate their forces. The Axis should attack along the broadest possible front, keeping the defenders stretched thin and reserves to a minimum. Breakthroughs, when accomplished, should strive to separate the Allied defenders from the main Axis targets.

3. The airborne units must be protected from overextending themselves and becoming the targets of surrounded counterattacks. The effort to extricate them from the trap will be costly and time consuming.

The use of the airborne units is probably the toughest nut for the Axis commander to crack because the role of the paratrooper is somewhat contradictory. The airborne units cannot afford to single out one objective and concentrate against it as this will allow the Allies to concentrate *their* forces against the thrust. On the other hand, the troops can't become totally separated as they would be cut off, surrounded individually, and most probably destroyed. A delicate balance must be found.

Once these general factors have been considered, it becomes time to draw up the plan of action.

The Plan—

In broad scope, the battle plan is a three pronged assault, two aimed at putting pressure on Valletta immediately and the third thrust cutting southwest against the airfields and Birzebbugia. Above all else, the three attacks should actively pursue the offensive to keep the defense stretched and harried. A solo attack anywhere would result in the defenders being able to extricate a large reserve of units and withdrawing into the bastions of Valletta and Floriana, where they would be extremely difficult to dislodge without proper support. In addition, if the majority of the island's defenders can be lured into the line in central Malta, they might emerge too weak to adequately defend everything they have to.

With this overview in mind, the details of the operation can be detailed as follows: (see Figure 11)

A. The Landing Force—

The Allied analysis of the four beaches is right on—the best choices are St. Paul's Bay and Western Beach. North is too far away and Valletta is too well defended. However, this is not to say that these beaches must never be used. The Axis key is, in reality, their unpredictability. The plan considered
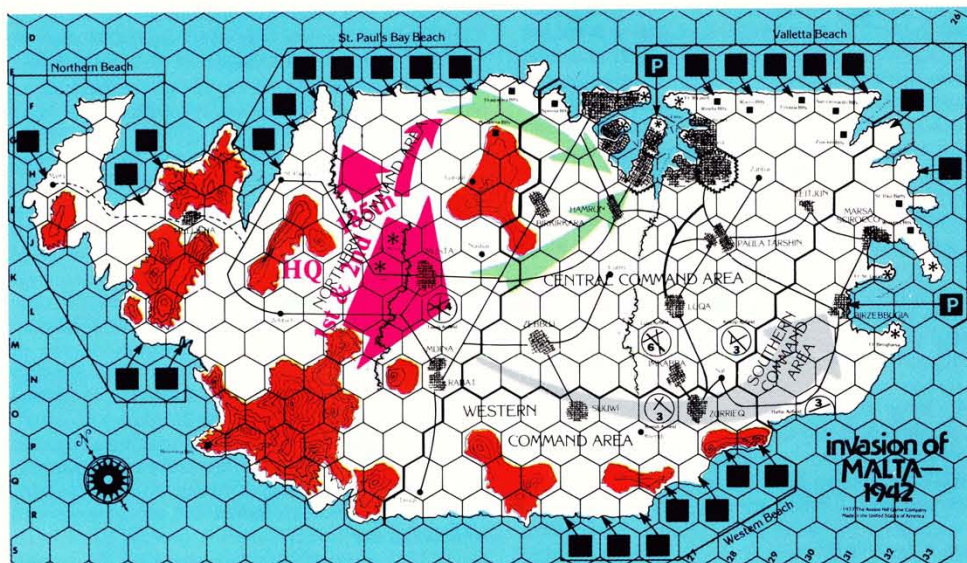
Figure 11: The Battle Plan: Red = Initial drops   Blue = German drive   Green = Italian drive

here calls for a landing on St. Paul's Bay Beach for several reasons. First, it's near a superb drop zone to allow for beach preparation by the airborne units. Second, aside from the four heavies, the three CDA battery positions are easily accessible and only one is defended by doubled defenders. Finally, it is nearer Valletta than Western Beach and, once the batteries are taken out, the capitol can be attacked early on, no doubt causing considerable alarm and defensive reaction by the Allies.

The next decision to be made is *when* to land. The choice for this operation is the morning of Day 2 (Turn 5) for two basic reasons. It gives the paratroopers an additional turn to find and reduce CDAs and coastal hex defenders, unhampered by Allied artillery, (unless it happens to be adjacent to the Axis units). It also allows the air force to do its thing against any remaining CDA positions. A night landing on turn 4 is also attractive as it would halve any remaining CDAs and allow the Commandos a free reign of terror in the rear. Experience shows that the air power availability is the key to this decision for now.

The objectives of the sea landed Italians:

a. Relieve airborne units on the front lines to keep their casualties to a minimum.

b. Protect the beachheads for the next convoy.

c. Assault and take Valletta. (Four words, but the hardest of the three objectives. It will probably require cleaning out every hex surrounding the port for artillery positions.)

d. Special Orders—Commandos. Land on the southern end of Malta near Marsa Scirocco and attack any available targets. Overall objective is to make absolute nuisances of themselves . . . .

B. Airborne Units—

The goals of the newly landed airborne units are 1) an airfield, 2) the beaches, and 3) a port. While the beaches and the port may be the most important two objectives of the paratroopers, there are some excellent reasons to go for an airfield immediately. One reason has already been mentioned—the need for Axis reinforcements. (Lose a Spezia battalion and it will cost you no points . . . .) Especially important to arrive early are the artillery and antitank units. But the most important reason to attack an airfield first is to gain the initiative. The defence must be put off balance and stretched out as soon as possible, and the best way to accomplish this is to assault a recognizable target with some value and push hard against it. The defenders will be forced to defend the airfield in order to stall the

paratroops and inflict casualty points. (His alternative is to concede the airfield with no fight which will also give the paratroops free movement to their next objective, not a pleasant prospect.) By keeping the defenders occupied on a secondary target, the main show (the landings) can go on with less defensive interference. The Axis alternative of concentrating on preparing the beaches for the landings will lose them an entire day, something they just can't afford. (Not to mention allowing the Allies to hem in the beaches with strong forces . . . .)

While drop 1 is the mainstay of the Axis airborne effort, drops 2 and 3 will keep the Allies guessing and keep him from committing himself wholly to a single sector. These two Italian regiments should be used as required for any number of purposes. For example, they could be

dropped onto a weak position behind the Allied main line of resistance to cut off retreats or pin down Allied reinforcements. Particularly good drops would involve attacking the artillery regiment of the defenders—put that out of action and white flags might fly sooner than expected. Care must be taken here, though, as it would be very easy to drop the Italians into a situation where they could be cut off and killed. So, if you do drop them behind the lines, make sure it's worth it!

The specific orders:

a) All bombers, initial turn. Concentrate on Takali Airfield—this will give 9 effective air bombardment points and a 5/6 chance of neutralizing the 65th AA battalion defending the airfield.) Subsequent 1st day turns—targets of opportunity, especially the light flak batteries. A good ground-air tactic is to neutralize the battery, then move next to it. It can't move out of Axis ZOC, so it will have to be rescued by force or abandoned—more hard decisions for the defender. One note of caution: keep the light flak battalions neutralized until they've been destroyed—those 12 fire factors can hurt!

b) 1st and 2nd Fallschirmjager Regiments, including the 7th Engineers: Land at drop site north of Takali (see figure 11). Objectives: Day 1, Takali, Musta, Mdina, and the eastern edge of the Gargur Hills. Support the Italians if required to secure St. Paul's Bay. Day 2-3, drive across Malta and take Birzebbugia.

c) 185th Folgore Regiment: land near St. Paul's Bay. Objectives: any beach hex units and reduction of the possible CDA sites at Magdalena, Dragonara, and Spinola Batteries. Upon completion, penetrate the Gargur Hills.

d) 186th Folgore Regiment: Land turn 2 in support of the 185th.

e) 187th Folgore Regiment: land turn 5 as dictated by circumstances.

The smaller units arriving with the 186th and 187th should be dropped in areas already secured by the big battalions, where they can be landed without

Figure 12: The end of Turn 1: A good tight Axis drop (white dot = eliminated unit)
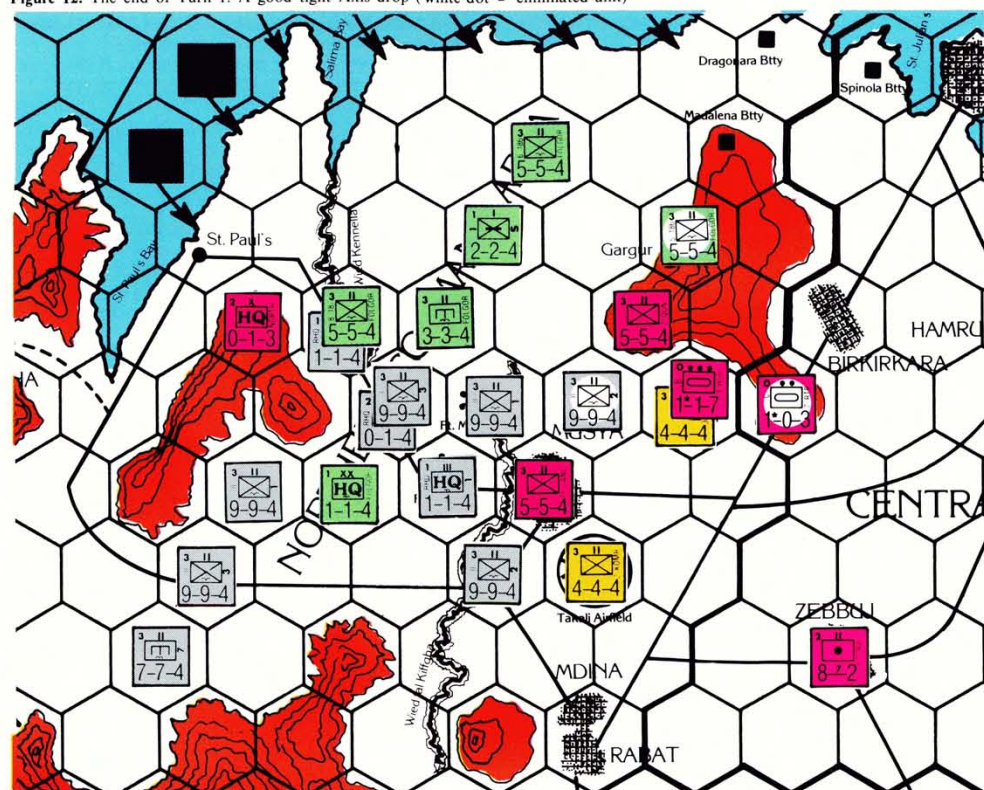
danger and be able to get into action with a minimum of delay—especially true of the artillery and antitank units landing with the 187th.

Figure 12 shows the result of these orders and the Allied reaction on turn 1. Although 2 battalions have been wiped out (32 victory points), the drop was tight and a large German force is unpinned, allowing their full operating capabilities on turn 2.

Tactically, the Axis should hit hard, fast, and often. When attacking with the convoy units, casualties don't count, so shove forward regardless of the defense. More caution should be used when advancing with artillery and the assault guns. These should be protected against any sudden Allied attack, as they will be required, along with everything else the Italians own, for the final reduction of Valletta.

The airborne units have to be somewhat more careful on their attacks as their casualties count. This is especially true of the Fallschirmjager battalions as it would be highly disadvantageous to the Axis cause to have their elite troops pulled out early. The Germans should linkup early and take advantage of maximum stacking. Their method of attack should be the high odds bludgeon, such as shown in figure 10a, in an attempt to kill off any Allied units that get in their way. This guideline, of course, has its exceptions. An example is figure 13: Here the Axis have come against the Luqa-Zurrieq line, the last strong doubled position before Birzebbugia. In order to force this line quickly, both Imkabba and Zurrieq should be hit at 3-1 for one turn—if the attacks fail, then it's back to the bludgeon.
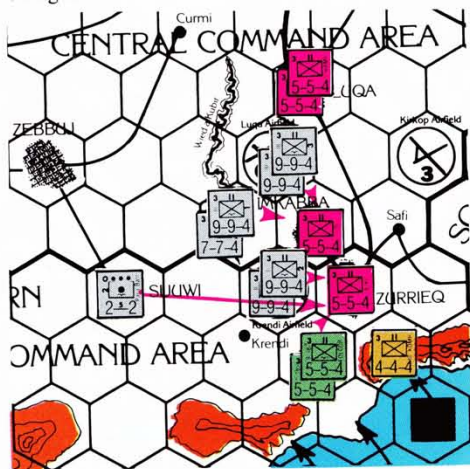
Figure 13: Assaulting the last line to Birzebbugia—two 3-1 assaults instead of a single bludgeon may turn the trick for the Axis.

Some final notes on Axis tactics:

1) Keep moving. With most of the main battle force having MA = 4, they can move through enemy ZOCs. By moving forward, the Axis can force positions that assaults failed to carry, such as the one in figure 10b. But, at the same time, make sure advanced units have open lines of retreat in case the Allies get ambitious.

2) Protect weakened German battalions. If forced to break up a battalion due to combat results, pull the remainder back out of the fight. If another battalion is broken up, recombine the two weakened units into a full sized battalion as in *CRETE*.

3) Against an opponent who uses the Allied hidden deployment rule, it pays to keep a record of the Allied units contacted and identified. This will help the Axis figure out what's in store at the next town.

III. REFLECTIONS—

While *INVASION OF MALTA, 1942* does an exceptional job, no game or simulation can

DESIGN ANALYSIS

PzKw VIa

ABS 3.2" 12
ABF 4.0"

GPres 14

15 A 12

GUN 88mm/L56   Eff Rng 3000m
AMMO 92 PEN 4.9"   2 MG 34

8 Wt 60.5t   HPWt 11.6
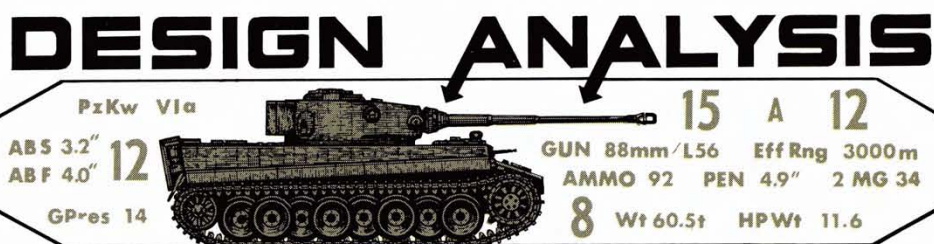
CRETE Design Problems and Solutions

By Vance von Borries

At 7:30 on the morning of 20 May 1941 the skies over Crete filled with a growing armada of German aircraft. The Luftwaffe had arrived to bomb and blast every Allied soldier, gun, and trench that could be found. The air raid looked like any other but somehow it felt different. By 8:00 the difference became visible. Out of the dust came the German gliders, descending quickly to their targets.

The cry of "Gliders" had hardly passed down the line when the skies erupted with a colorful display of little puffs with men dangling below: parachutists!

"Wildly waving their legs, some already firing their Schmeissers, the parachutists came down, in the terraced vineyards, crashing through the peaceful olive boughs, in the yards of houses, on roofs, in the open fields where they found earth. Others, ridding themselves of their harness, crept cautiously in search of comrades, only to meet enemies. But where they landed out of range, there was the chance to collect more weapons and ammunition from the canisters, to organize in their sections, to attack. The day had indeed begun." (N.Z.O.H., p.89)

Anyone who watches the movies or the 6 o'clock news might think things were different. After all, don't paratroops scatter the hapless defenders by making a swift attack at the crucial point? Perhaps we have all been led to believe in a certain mystique about the paratrooper as nurtured by Hollywood or Walter Cronkite. But Hollywood and Cronkite to the contrary, the paratrooper is not always a superman. The paratrooper is most vulnerable during his first minutes on the ground, assuming he even makes it to the ground.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

It is perhaps this vulnerability of descent and the danger of disorganization that makes parachute operations difficult to simulate in a wargame. While at some point in the design of the game the elitist legend of the paratroops must be dealt with since man-to-man operations are implicit, the design must start with the strategic situation, which is known in game terms as the scope of simulation. While *CRETE* and *MALTA* are games, they also are simulations of an aspect of history. The scope of the games involves two dimensions: the limit of simulation and the historical parameters. Clearly, the historical subjects are the parachute assault against Crete and the proposed battle for Malta. The design must take care to distinguish the forces within a player's control from the forces shaping the game. In a tactical battle game such as *CRETE* and *MALTA*, the player should be in control of only his immediate military situation, not of the surrounding political events or military forces lying outside his normal operational span of control. This means there should be nothing the player can do to change the nature of the battlefield situation.

As an example, consider the strategic setting for CRETE which imposed several constraints on the Germans. First was the Germans' primary strategic consideration: they had to win the battle as quickly as possible because the bulk of their airforce was needed in the impending Russian Campaign. Second, thanks to the unfounded assumption that Cretans were pro-Axis, the Germans thought they

could conduct a quick battle and bag thousands of British prisoners. Third, Gen. Student, the German paratroop commander, received such pressure from interservice rivalry he felt he had to pull off an impressive victory. As the clincher, the Germans were unaware that the Allies had broken the Enigma Code and had an almost perfect knowledge of the German order of battle and attack plan. The primary Allied constraint was Churchill's insistance upon holding Crete as a naval base. Although the Allied command would fight, it was willing to evacuate the moment things got tough.

When considering the above historical constraints and keeping in mind that the constraints guide the design of the game, the solutions to several design problems were revealed. The first solution involved a problem discovered in the early playtesting: the Germans had too many possible attack plans. While this early version allowed the German player nearly complete planning freedom it gave the game a very slow start due to the highly involved planning of the attack wave for each sector, the reinforcements, and even air-droppable supplies. A solution had to be found to speed up the start of play.

Historically, Crete could have been invaded according to almost any attack plan. The whole 7th Flieger Division could have attacked just one airfield, destroyed its garrison, and then have struck out overland with reinforcements to destroy the Allied coastal garrisons one by one. With their overwhelming air superiority, the German army could not have lost, but this would hardly make an enjoyable game. And, allowing the German such an option would ignore several situational constraints: the Germans were forced by the strategic situation and the proddings of interservice rivalry to attempt a speedy conquest, not to mention they had no idea of the true Allied strength.

The only game solution was to place greater limitations on the German player: he must be obliged to follow the historical attack plan. Any Allied player who plays the game more than once will know that plan, reflecting the historical fact that the Allies did know German intentions. Thus it is reasonable to oblige the German player to abide by the historical invasion plan, shown on the Assault Organization Card. In addition, the paratroop units are obliged to drop within four hexes of an airfield, reflecting historical supply limitations, the Allied knowledge of the plans, and the German underestimation of Allied strength and belief in a quick victory. Also, as a practical matter in a game without parachute drop restrictions, no matter how encompassing the Allied defense perimeter, the Germans could always land outside, organize with impunity, and attack with maximum organization and co-ordination. This rule, combined with rules for inverted counters and decoy positions, makes it still possible for a German player to miscalculate the Allied player's strength around each airfield.

FORTRESS MALTA

Invasion of MALTA—1942
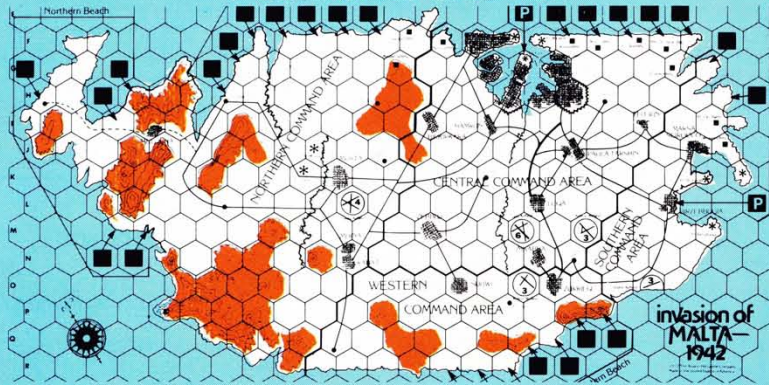
Malta is covered with fortifications. Ever since the British occupied the island in the Napoleonic Era the island was considered a naval fortress. During the mid 19th century many coastal fortifications were built and batteries installed. Remnants of these were pressed into use during WWII. One prominent system of fortifications was known as the Victoria Lines. It consisted of numerous weapons pits and small forts, and incorporated a natural defense line running from the Madalena Battery through forts Musts and Tarja to Binjemma Battery. During the 19th century an enemy could occupy the island outside this line, yet Malta could still operate effectively as a naval base. However, by 1940 the range of field howitzers was so great that, at best, the fortifications would serve as the last line of trenches. Given the dimensions of the island, the British had to move their defense seaward and into the skies. Once enemy troops had arrived on Malta, had artillery in action, and had secured supplies then Malta would cease to be a base and essentially would have been captured. The critical factor in the strategic defense of Malta was command of the air. When this was lost, the Royal Navy could not remain. So a study of the struggle for Malta is a study of the air war above.

The air war over Malta underwent several phases. There was the first Blitz by the Italians during 1940 when the British had only three scratch-built Gladiator fighters. After the Italian attack died down the German Luftwaffe arrived in January, 1941. On the day of their arrival they inflicted severe damage to the British carrier *ILLUSTRIOUS*. British naval power then departed the central Mediterranean and the Axis commanded the skies until the invasion of Crete and the Russian campaign called away the Luftwaffe. The Allied command always desired to maintain Malta's use as a base and during the second half of 1941 Malta became a stopover point for aircraft flown to Egypt. Malta then had sufficient aircraft to go on the offensive by attacking Axis supply convoys to Africa. This offensive was so effective that in December the Luftwaffe began returning from Russia. As the pressure grew during the next three months the British were forced to send the first Spitfires to the Mediterranean. On 20 March, 1942 the Axis felt strong enough to begin the Grand Assault, the air Blitz to neutralize Malta. By mid-April the Spitfire reinforcements had been reduced through daily air action to six. In this grim situation the Axis had achieved their greatest control of the air. When on 20 April forty-six Spitfires were flown to Malta from the U.S. carrier *WASP*, the Axis superiority was such that all were shot down or destroyed on the ground within three days. It was this success and the continued Allied weakness that prompted the Axis command to report the complete destruction of Malta's air defense. Presumably the next major step would be the actual landing on

Malta. But the very same day this report was made (10 May) another sixty-one Spitfires were flown from the *WASP* (and 17 more on 18 May). In one day the picture had changed: Malta was combat ready again.

The Axis could not invade without air superiority, but even if the Axis could have gained a lasting command of the air, they faced several other problems. The spearhead of any attack on Malta would consist of the paratroopers. While they could be dropped anywhere on the island, they would need heavy weapons support to break the fortifications. Barring quick capture of an airfield the weapons would have to come across easily defensible beaches dominated by hills, forts, and steep cliffs. The north and east approaches to the island were covered by minefields and considerable coast artillery. For the sake of the game it must be assumed that Italian minesweepers would have been successful in clearing the way to St. Paul's Bay Beach and Valletta Beach. Once the invader is ashore and has survived the counterattack, he is faced with the necessity of quickly seizing a supply port because the beaches were too narrow to bear heavy supply traffic. In sum, invasion would depend upon the success of the airborne battalions in capturing the few key points necessary to enable the main invasion force to land successfully.

Fortress Malta was tough but it faced many problems too. First, in consideration of the civil population, Lord Gort (in command from 7 May 1942) would have to consider capitulation when food and water supplies ran low as Percival did earlier at Singapore (15 Feb 1942). The equivalent of four reinforced brigades defended the island, but during the spring and summer of 1942 they had become weary, were hungry and malnourished, lost their infantry training edge, and even were split up to provide labor details to remove bomb damage. In some photographs even the uniforms were in tatters. Another problem was that at times the AA guns fell silent as sufficient stocks had to be available in event of an invasion. Malta was also besieged psychologically. Every soldier and civilian watched the convoys and after 22 months of this behavior a debilitating siege mentality had taken hold. Many were anxious for the Axis to invade just to get the agony over with. On the other hand, the siege united the Maltese people with the result that there were no saboteurs or collaborators.

An interesting aside to the fortification problem is that the island is honeycombed with caves. Some of the cave systems were so extensive that one writer called the tunnel from Valletta to Rabat "a highway". Although most cave systems were unknown even to the Maltese, and military use would have been limited to partisan action, the island headquarters at Valletta, most granaries and water reserves, and by 1942, workshops and some aircraft hangars all were underground.

GAME SCALE

The strategic setting constraints also had an effect on the size of the mapboard and the level of conflict. Since the subject matter is the invasion of an island it was necessary to represent all of the important battle areas in one continuous map surface. *CRETE* employs a scale of 1.6km per hex. A scale of 1.2km would have been preferable, for more exacting tactical detail, but the 1.6 km scale was the largest possible given the dimensions of the gameboard sections. The long odd gameboard arrangement is regrettable but unavoidable given the nature of Cretan geography. The *MALTA* game uses the recommended 1.2 km per hex scale, and the entire island fit onto one gameboard section.

Closely related to the hex size problem was the unit size problem. Decisions on both problems were made simultaneously because the size of the unit is a function of the amount of terrain represented in one hex. A battalion level of representation was chosen because, at this level, players could easily see and control the action of an entire battle. The alternatives: brigade level or company level would reduce variability of play or lose sight of the course of the overall battle. The rule allowing the German player to substitute companies for his paratroop battalions reflects the necessity of simulating paratroop drift and the German practice of assigning missions to individual companies. Research indicated that two battalions would fit well into 1.2 km per hex. At 1.6 km, however, the question arose whether three battalions should be stacked. So, other factors had to be considered such as command control, unit density, total units in the game, and the historical record. The most practical approach was to keep the game at battalion level, with two battalions per hex thus maintaining consistency with *MALTA's* scale. Related to the unit size problem was the decision to stick with full units in the combat system. An alternative to the full unit elimination found on the Combat Results Table would have been to reflect partial losses through step reduction. This would give the advantage of allowing many battalions a degree of staying power. But it also would have meant an unacceptable increase in set-up time. How could anyone ever sort out all those step reduction counters? Some people thought *ANZIO* was bad enough. When the step reduction system was tested, it did not work well, although combat resolution was perhaps more realistic.

Despite appearances, the CRT is not very bloody for a unit elimination table. Only in the worst circumstances in real battle would a unit be completely destroyed within a few hours. Most game action is at 1-1, 2-1, or 3-1 odds where, with a two thirds chance of no one getting hurt, unless surrounded, units usually must be attacked several times before being eliminated. A unique feature in this game is the new exchange system which is found at the low odds. It allows the attacker to adjust the level of intensity of a battle to where he can sacrifice extra casualties to gain a position. In sum, the CRT provides a clean resolution that fits the game scale and maintains the player's focus on the more important problem posed by the game.

TIME SCALING

A scaling decision all its own is the time frame in which to situate the game. *MALTA* presents no problems—the game lasts until one side collapses, or mutual exhaustion. *CRETE* is more complicated. *CRETE* was designed to center around the decisive struggle for the airfields, without which the German player could not adequately supply and reinforce his paratroopers. To stretch out the game to include Allied retreat strategies would distract from the central purpose, and would ignore political constraints, particularly Churchill's insistance that Crete should be a naval fortress, and that the island

should be held to inflict enough casualties on the German parachute corps to discourage possible future airborne attacks on Cyprus, Syria, or the Suez Canal. This restraint allows the Allied player a choice of only two strategies within the scope of the game: hold the island, or inflict heavy casualties on German paratroops before evacuating. Allowing a strategy emphasizing evacuation would defeat the purpose of the game. Only the first two strategy alternatives were codified in the Advanced Game Victory Conditions, and the game length was restricted to the moment Gen. Freyberg, the Allied commander, decided on final evacuation.

The final time scaling decision was to create four game turns in one game day. With unit elimination and battalion scale units, fewer turns per day would have been preferable but sufficient time had to be allowed for paratroops to land, organize, and attack all during the same day. Otherwise, more game turn phases with the required complexity would have been required.

PARATROOP DRIFT

The paratroop drift results do not represent another scaling decision but a German organization problem. The intention is to scatter paratroops all over the countryside, emphasizing the vulnerability of the paratrooper during his first moments on the ground as well as a normal scattering. There can be no "perfect plan" if only because of the random element of drift. Yet the drift result is not totally random. This too was intended. The actual landing location for each unit should be a function of the aircraft approach route, the prevailing winds, and anti-aircraft fire. Ground opposition will break up the aircraft formation and then the paratroops will be scattered and disorganized, but still according to the critical factors. The bias is important since at this scale total randomization is not correct.

NAVAL ACTION

A paratrooper's game should be concerned with only one subject, how best to accomplish his objective with the *parachute* forces at hand. Naval action was contained within another sphere of command for both sides. At Crete neither Gen. Student nor Gen. Freyberg had any control over the naval forces involved. The Germans attempted to send two invasion fleets to Crete but both were intercepted, probably due to the British advance knowledge through the Enigma Cypher, and were partially destroyed. An introduction of naval action to "save" the fleets or to intercept the British evacuation convoys would shift concern away from the primary tactical fight at the airfields. This is not the purpose of the game. Further, such a shift would raise the problem of a conflict of strategies: one of isolating the island versus one of seizing the island by airborne forces. In sum, to add to the naval action would hinder a playable situation. The *HMS YORK* and the coastal steamer are exceptions because of their limited tactical nature.

One naval activity which could have affected the outcome of the battle on land was naval bombardment. Historically the British Royal Navy did bombard Crete, but with disappointing results. The British conducted a night raid against Maleme with their faster ships, and later made a carrier-assisted raid against an Axis airfield on Scarpanto Island. Each raid lacked effectiveness due to lack of proper observation of target and lack of co-ordination with ground based activity. The Italians too planned a bombardment raid only this was to be against Malta. Malta's fixed coastal installations were to be bombarded by two old battleships which were not to fire more than 200 partial charge rounds. Observation was to depend upon spotter biplanes launched from the decks of the battleships. Like the British

plan this action lacked co-ordination with ground forces. Both the British action and the Italian planned action were omitted from the game because of their brief and insubstantial effect.

AIR OPERATIONS

Although the naval action is peripheral, air action is not. The critical prerequisite before any airborne invasion is the necessity for complete air superiority. Over Crete the Luftwaffe met only token British resistance until 19 May. On that day the last British aircraft (four Hurricanes and three Gladiators) were withdrawn to Egypt. The next day the German airborne invasion began. This, how-ever, was more coincidence than plan. In its struggle for air superiority the Allied air strength had been eliminated in Greece. Still, some 45 aircraft evacuated to Crete (27 Blenheims, 12-14 Hurri-canes, and 6 Gladiators) during 22-24 April but conditions there were so primitive that these could not be maintained in continual air combat. By 13 May the Blenheims had departed and the Hurri-canes were reduced to six. On 17 May ten new Hurricanes arrived but these too could not last against the daily Blitz. Throughout the battle the British maintained the hope that the RAF might return. This intention prevented the Allied ground troops from destroying the airfields. That this hope was strong was proven by the actual arrival at Heraklion on 23 May of seven Hurricanes (of 12 sent). Still, these could not materially affect the outcome of the battle. They were too few. The British also tried bomber operations with Welling-ton and Blenheim bombers from Egypt. These bombed German airfields in Greece and later bombed Maleme airfield. Where the nightly efforts (13-19 May) before the invasion had little appreci-able effect in preventing invasion the occasional later efforts had even less effect. There were just too few bombers available. The situation recalls the Norwegian campaign in 1940 where the RAF tried to cover Aandalsnes from the Orkneys. But perhaps the real cause for the RAF failure did not lie entirely with its lack of numbers. At this stage of the war in the Mediterranean, Crete was only one of over a half dozen operative fronts drawing RAF resources. Each new ground commitment required more aircraft and shortages soon developed. Chided for not giving promised support, the Middle East RAF

The Axis Invasion Fleets

The Axis invasion fleets consisted of a mixture of small coastal freighters and passenger ships, an odd steam yacht, some naval tugs, and a large number of caiques (auxiliary engined wooden fishing boats). This unwieldy assemblage was organized into two convoys and was to carry all the heavy equipment that was not transportable by air as well as some infantry for whom no aircraft space was available. The exact number of men and amount of equipment has proven impossible to determine, but it can be estimated that the first convoy of 25 vessels was bound for Maleme with about 2331 men. The second convoy with an estimated 4000 men in 38 vessels departed later and made for Heraklion.

A third convoy also sailed for Crete. It carried about 2685 men drawn mainly from the Italian "Regina" Division based on Rhodes. For this operation the Italians used an even more wretched collection of naval craft. Yet the Italian command, with no prior notification of the impending attack, was able to plan, load, and land this invasion fleet within six days of the decision to intervene. It is possible this fleet succeeded in passing from Rhodes to Crete because the British were too occupied with evacuations.

✠ COUNTING FACTORS ⦿

THE UNITS—

In the game, the Germans may look like supermen compared to some Allied units, but there are some very strong reasons for the disparity as may be discovered by examining the cross-section of units displayed below. Each unit in the game underwent a similar analysis. The results, with slight modification, are found in the game box.

GERMAN UNITS—

Consisting of about 120 men this unit, typical of all parachute rifle companies, was well armed, had good modern equipment and the right equipment when organized; it was well led and performed well. Four of these plus a headquarters composed one battalion. The Sturm Regiment had been recently formed from the assault battalion that attacked Eben Emael. On paper this regiment was the elite of the elite and was to be carried in gliders.

While this unit was typical of the German paratroops, it was the first paratroop unit raised (in 1936). Commanded by Col. Bruno Brauer the 1st Regiment took part in the attack on Denmark and Norway and later saw action in Holland at Rotterdam. Contrary to the Sturm Regiment, the battalion headquarters in the regular battalions was not intended for assault.

Both units represented recently formed support formations for the air division. The anti-tank unit had air-droppable 28/20mm squeeze-bore guns whose only effectiveness against a Matilda tank was a chance track hit. The anti-aircraft unit was composed of air-droppable 20mm AA weapons.

Consisting of about 100 men, this unit was essentially a well equipped heavy weapons company. Since the rifle battalions had to paradrop without their heavy weapons, these units were attached to each assault group to restore weight to the attack.

Just a detachment, this unit represented four 75mm/LG 40 recoilless rifles. This weapon could be hauled by two men. It had a good rate of fire (6 rpm) and had an effective range of 5,600 yards. While quite effective in direct fire its use as a howitzer was wholly unsatisfactory.

The first unit was typical of the mountain units employed on Crete. Like the paratroops it too was short on heavy weapons but was a veteran unit, was well led, and had high morale. The recon unit was essentially a stripped down maneuver battalion.

The first unit consisted of twelve 75mm howitzers with range of 4,800 meters. It was effective against fortifications. Each piece required several transport planes to carry it, the gunners, ammo, and draft animals. Twelve 150mm howitzers with range of 12,325 meters composed the second unit. This artillery was much too heavy for air transport.

Both armor units had over a dozen tanks apiece, the first being composed of Pzkw II and the second of Pzkw III made available from the 5th Panzer Regiment. Large amounts of armor were not made available due to the risks in transport and the scarcity of available shipping. No armor could be transported by air.

ITALIAN UNITS—

The 33rd Regiment may be considered representative of regular Italian infantry during 1942. It consisted of 3,332 men organized into three battalions (each 876 men) plus support companies. The "Livorno" Division was well trained and organized and fought well in Sicily a year later.

The Italians had detachments of paratroops since the beginning of the war but they did not compose an exclusively parachute division until a German training mission arrived in early 1942. "Folgore" was an elite unit, comparable to German units, and it fought well and gallantly at El Alamein.

The San Marco Regiment was a navy marine unit and was easily the best unit in Italy. It was well trained, well led, and its members fought with great determination. Originally, the regiment was raised for special small unit missions but eventually the regiment expanded to seven battalions, four of which fought in Africa. At Malta, commando detachments were to make special attacks against forts Benghaisa and Delimara.

On paper the normal Italian artillery regiment had 2769 men and 36 guns, but for the Malta operation the heavy artillery was removed from divisional command. For each division this left two groups of twelve 75mm howitzers. The light artillery unit for each division consisted of the independent mortar battalion of 529 men and 27 mortar tubes. The Italian 81mm mortar was considered one of the most effective in Europe.

command blamed many of its difficulties on the lack of replacement aircraft rather than face where the problem more squarely stood: an inability to set policies and a lack of ground organization. On Crete the ground organization problem was particularly acute. The ground crews had little equipment, no facilities, no back-up personnel, and were reduced to cannibalizing damaged aircraft to keep a few in the air. Clearly, for the game no RAF units could effectively operate from bases on Crete. In examining the historical record, these twin problems of poor policy making and lack of ground organization appear endemic to all British military operations outside of Britain. It is little wonder that the other service arms lost confidence in the RAF. One British seaman was heard to say as he inflated his lifebelt, "This is all the ruddy air support I'll get this trip."

As the British air operations faded away the Luftwaffe gained an undisputed command of the air over all the Aegean and much of the Eastern Mediterranean. While some German air strength was always directed against Allied shipping, its focus was on operations over Crete. In the game the Luftwaffe is represented in three ways. First, the Allies have limited road mobility due to the pervasiveness of German fighter planes. This mobility is further hampered by fighter plane concentrations. Second, there is strategic bombing of specific types of military targets. Third, the Luftwaffe is represented as combat strength points to fulfill its mission of tactical support of the ground troops.

Tactically, the Luftwaffe is represented as strength points rather than as individual aircraft formations. This reflects the fact that aircraft were dispatched from the airfields as fast as they could rearm and refuel, forming up in battle as ad hoc groups. It is specifically a strength point representation in the game as this directly relates its function as "flying artillery" to the combat system. The alternative would have been more game turn phases with the resultant complexity of play. The only difficulty tactical air support had in the actual battles was where the British figured out the ground call signs. In sum, German tactical bombing proved quite effective in Crete.

In contrast, strategic bombing had its difficulties. Several targets were neutralized but not destroyed. The AA batteries, for example, could be knocked out only by ground attack. This is why special glider detachments were assigned to attack AA units in Suda Sector. The cities were also Luftwaffe targets although such bombing was intended as a terror device. Specific military targets other than fixed installations could not be readily identified because of the excellent British camouflage. Strategic bombing was limited to these roles and is thereby not part of the game's combat system. Therefore such missions are resolved on a separate table with results having a much different effect than found in combat results.

THE DESIGN OF MALTA

With the completion of the *CRETE* design a complete game system for use in another parachute game was available. While *CRETE* was built first, *MALTA* tested many of the design features found in the *CRETE* system and thereby provided an instant feedback as to the success of each design solution. This feedback aspect is perhaps quite unusual in wargame design because the changes occurred before publication of either game. It was fortunate that the *MALTA* design was in no way forced by some element in the *CRETE* design. Generally, many of of the same historical conditions present at Crete were also present at Malta one year later, thus there was already the design "solution" for: nature

of combat, game scale, time frame, fleet activity, air operations, and physical lay-out for the game. The big differences in this historical subject were that: first, it never actually occurred and second, the Axis placed more emphasis on the amphibious phase of the invasion. Despite the many similarities, *MALTA* had many unique design problems.

Because the invasion never took place there was the problem of what likely invasion date should the game assume. Malta presented a problem to the Axis from the very beginning of the war. Each year the Axis prepared another invasion plan. There was

the Pre-War Plan, the 1940 Plan, the 1941 Plan, and several 1942 plans. No wonder that by mid-1942 the Italian general staff was anxious to get the invasion underway. The original game contained scenarios reproducing each plan, thereby leaving the players with the decision on most likely invasion date. But the scenarios were omitted from the final version of the game. With such necessary size and complexity, they would never have been played. The scenarios had really been designed for the avid and interested wargamer, so rather than entirely forget them, they are presented here. The most likely invasion in my opinion was the one scheduled for spring 1942. The

plan for this date was the one chosen by Avalon Hill to be the actual game. One of the major reasons for choosing this date was the psychological predisposition of the Axis leaders. Mussolini did not feel the invasion would succeed without German help. But Hitler had a phobia about invading islands, particularly after the Crete experience. Furthermore, he was convinced the Italians would only run if they ever had to oppose the British fleet. For the previous two years neither Axis partner seemed willing to make any decisive Mediterranean

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Headquarters staffs were, of course, important to the operation of any battle. In the game, each headquarters unit represents commander, staff, signals, various liaison sections, and occasionally a defense platoon. The "Creforce" and Malta" HQ units each represent more headquarters personnel than found at brigade level but these had no additional combat effectiveness.

These composed the original defense force on Crete before the evacuation from Greece. While generally up to strength in manpower they lent out much of their equipment to the evacuees. They were still well organized and had not suffered the debilitating effects of a long retreat.

The M.N.B.D.O. (Mobile Naval Base Defense Organization) was a navy unit (Royal Marines) designed primarily for the defense of naval bases, as its name implies. 1,941 men of the organization were on Crete while another 1,000 were still at Alexandria, Egypt. This organization possessed all the anti-aircraft defense, coastal defense, signals, workshops, landing and command equipment necessary for the operation of a port. It was brought from England specifically for Crete, arriving at Suez on 21 April. It arrived at Suda between 10 May and 15 May.

The main body consists of the Signals unit (the 0-0-2); 684 signals, HQ, pioneer, and workshop personnel from the MNBDO plus attached HQ and staff personnel from other services. Scattered in four detachments on Crete the "23/RM" unit was originally an LAA unit but on Crete was armed instead with light machine guns. During the battle a composite RM battalion was formed from assorted armed RM detachments. This is represented in the game by the MNBDO infantry and the "S/L RM" units. The remaining units were generally armed as intended. The two coast artillery batteries had four 4″ Mk IV L/40 guns (range 10,200 yards) and 518 men between them. The two heavy AA batteries had sixteen 3″ AA guns and 172 men between them. Generally, the 3″ AA guns (vertical effective range 20,000 ft) had not proven equal to the task of high

Allied Units

altitude AA protection and were in the process of being replaced by the 3.7″ AA gun (vertical effective range 32,000 ft).

This battalion held the vital Hill 107 overlooking Maleme airfield. While it was short on standard equipment and had only 644 men, it had within its perimeter RAF personnel, ten Bofors guns, machine guns, a coast artillery battery, and two Matilda tanks. The unit was well trained but a confused command structure impeded co-ordinated action. Furthermore its own commander chose to retreat at the wrong moment.

The Greeks were, for the most part, untrained, ill-equipped, and unorganized. They had no transport, and they were armed with five different types of rifle and an average of less than 20 rounds of ammunition per man. The deficiency was partially mollified by using weapons captured on the battlefield but so many were ill armed that the units dissolved in combat. The 6th Regiment had 1485 men but the units overall averaged about 1000 men, nearly all recruits. The Gendarmes unit (800 men) was disciplined and performed respectably by repelling all German attacks on Retimo.

This is a cross-section of the composite units employed on Crete going from bad to the worst. The "comp/NZ" unit was composed historically of 1007 men arranged into five companies. These were armed men from the support services: artillerists, truck drivers, and supply personnel. They had little to no training as infantry but fought well considering their background. The "Roy Per" unit represents a very similar situation but with only about 700 men. Originally it was just a camp for men about to be evacuated to Egypt but during the battle it organized as a combat unit and sent a detachment to the nearby village of Perivolia to help guard the King of Greece; hence the unit's name. The "comp/17" battalion consisted of remnants of the 17th Australian still on Crete. Its 387 men had only 270 rifles between them and simply had no other weapons. None of these formations had trained as a unit.

The artillery on Crete was nearly as bad as some of the infantry. For unexplained reasons the Allied command did not wish to risk 25 pounder artillery on Crete so 100 captured Italian pieces (generally 75mm) were sent instead, but only 49 survived transit. These guns, some of which the Italians had originally captured from Germany during WWI and others from France during the current war, lacked optical instruments, charts, and signaling equipment. Some sighting instruments had to be fashioned literally from chewing gum and bits of wood. Only 300-400 rounds were available per gun and some ammo lacked fuses. The "1 Lt" unit was the only modern unit with four 3.7″ mountain howitzers. Unfortunately, because it had refused infantry support until too late it was overrun during the first hours.

Most of the AA units were modern, well supplied, fully equipped, and well camouflaged. On Crete the only big problem was the lack of sufficient numbers of guns. The "129" unit was equipped with twelve Bofors 40mm guns. The "234" unit was equipped with eight 3.7″ AA guns.

All told on Crete there were 16 light tanks and 9 "Matilda" heavy tanks. As with the artillery, these were the worst available armor from Egypt. They seem to have been sent because it was known that paratroops would have almost no defense against them. Accordingly they were scattered in many small detachments. Armor losses were primarily due to mechanical breakdown.

When Italy entered the war on 10 June 1940 there was only one fully Maltese infantry battalion. Presumably it was organized and equipped along the same lines as the British regulars on the island like all other Commonwealth units. Eventually, three more battalions were raised but due to the continual siege these probably did not receive a full allotment of equipment and certainly could not train in large scale maneuvers. Whether the fact that they would be fighting for their homes and family would make up for lack of equipment, one can only conjecture.

SCENARIOS FOR CRETE AND MALTA

By Vance Von Borries

Lately we've been offering professional quality components on a mail order basis to complement the better variants published in the GENERAL. Your initial response to such projects as the KINGMAKER variant event cards, RICHTHOFEN's maneuver cards, and PANZER LEADER 1940 counters has been such that we've decided to continue backing the better variants which appear in the GENERAL with special mail order parts. Such is the case here, where $2.00 will buy you a set of the variant CRETE/MALTA counters discussed below. While we would like to include these extras free in every issue as an added bonus, we couldn't do so without increasing the price of the magazine. So rather than make everyone pay more for variant counters which only some would want or use, we'll continue to offer them as a separate mail order item for those truly interested in exploring the variant further.

Many alternative scenarios are possible and all these were left out of the game on purpose due to the extra complexity they would have caused. *GENERAL* readers, however, might enjoy the extra complexity and so these scenarios with some optional rules included within them are presented here. All scenarios are entirely optional. Players should feel free to mix and match any of these until they have what they feel is the right personal mix of complexity and historicity versus playability. Always assume use of the regular rules unless an exception is specifically stated.

AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE

A. Additional Allied Equipment

In reserve in Egypt were some sixty 25 pounder artillery pieces. If these had been sent to Crete in place of the 75mm artillery pieces actually sent, the Allied defense might have been impervious to any attack plan. Players are cautioned that this scenario alters play balance heavily in favor of the Allies.

1. Delete the "2/2 AFR" unit and all field artillery units (4) except the 1 Lt/RA unit.
2. Add the following units (borrow some counters from *MALTA*):

Australian artillery
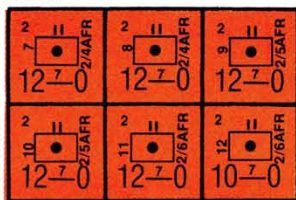
3. Placement:
   a. Place one artillery unit with each brigade and one with Creforce Reserve.
   b. The heavy AA units may be placed only with Creforce Reserve in Suda Sector.
   c. The remaining units may be placed anywhere.
4. Other rules:
   a. The Australian field artillery units may be moved by trucks.
   b. The "1 Lt/RA" unit and the four German mountain field artillery units do not need a clear Line of Fire to the target hex when attacking.

c. As an exception to rule H.5, parachute battalions may also be reformed by use of the RHQ unit of the same regiment, but only if at least one battalion HQ unit in that regiment has been eliminated.
d. OPTIONAL: To reflect the possibility that some Australian artillery might not have arrived, roll for the arrival of each unit. First, assign each unit to its brigade then roll. Unit is received on roll of 1, 2, 3, 4.

B. Variations on Axis Convoys

The arrival of a convoy in the game can have a considerable effect on play balance, tipping the scales in the landing area in favor of the Germans or by giving them a second chance in one sector. Obviously, because of this possibility and the great uncertainty as to the actual composition of the convoys, much design analysis was invested in the matter of the convoys. This scenario explores one further "answer" to the question. The presence of the extra units shown below is suspected but not confirmed.

1. Add the following units as desired to either convoy:
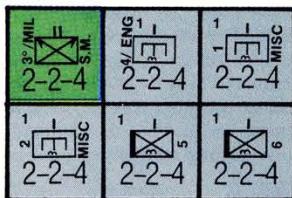
2. Crete Axis Convoy Table adjustments:
   a. Make the following die roll adjustments: any turn:
NIGHT—add "2"
MORN—add "1"
NOON—normal table
EVEN—subtract "1"
   b. If a convoy (regular or decoy) is scheduled for an EVEN turn (turns 3, 7, 11, etc):
     1) Delete one fighter and two bomber strength points from airforces available that turn.
     2) Convert all "Elim" results to "Abort".
3. Convoy flexibility: Convoy times may be rescheduled after the game has started . . .
   a. Either convoy may be rescheduled any time up to four turns before regular arrival. For example, a convoy scheduled for Turn #6 may be rescheduled only on turns #1 or #2.
   b. The beach destination may not be changed.
   c. The two convoys may be scheduled for the same beach destination but may not arrive within four turns of each other.

C. The Italian Invasion Fleet

The Italian invasion fleet was actually dispatched to Crete and it successfully landed on 28 May although at an unimportant location. It was possible this fleet could have been co-ordinated with the main Axis effort.

1. Add the following units:
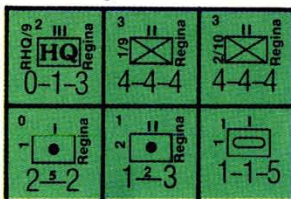
2. This convoy is scheduled like the other convoys for any turn, Turn #16 or later.
3. Schedule one extra decoy convoy, Turn #16 or later.
4. This convoy is restricted to either Heraklion Beach with the arrival resolved on the Sea Movement Table or to entry through the far eastern edge of the mapboard. East edge entry is like the Allied South Edge entry procedure with resolution on the Allied South Edge Table but with a one turn delay before entry. For either entry include appropriate beach destination marker.
5. The Italian armor unit neither gives any special combat advantage nor can it act as an anti-tank unit.

D. Additional German Paratroops

During a battle such as Crete, estimations of enemy activities can become very confused. During the confusion on 3 May a miscellaneous group of parachutists of uncertain size landed in Heraklion sector. The only thing certain about this group is that no historian has attempted to explain why they were not dropped earlier.

1. The following units are available as airborne reinforcements on Turn #13; any single sector:
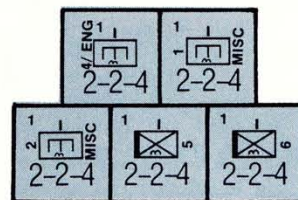
2. If combining this scenario with Scenario B then these units must first attempt to enter play by convoy. If any or all are "Aborted" then they may be available as airborne reinforcements no earlier than either the sixth turn after their convoy attempt or Turn #13, whichever is later.
3. OPTIONAL: To allow the German player an edge in the game distribute these units as desired among the Turn #1 or Turn #3 blocks of airborne units (but not with the glider battalion). Distribute after the Allied player has completed his set-up. It was possible for the Germans to have had more transport aircraft available at the initial stages of the battle.

E. Greek Irregulars

German paratroopers expected to find a friendly population on Crete. Instead they encountered numerous partisan bands. While these bands had little tactical significance, they accounted for several hundred German casualties. This scenario brings some of this partisan action into play. None of the irregulars below is in play at the beginning of the game.

1. Greek irregular units available:
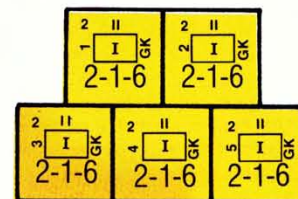
2. Starting the first turn the Allied player may roll the die to activiate a Greek irregular. It is received on roll of 1, 2, 3. Only one unit may be obtained per turn and this unit may be placed on any town or city hex not in enemy zone of control. If the roll is unsuccessful then no unit is received this turn. Resolution and placement is during the Allied movement phase, so the unit may move this turn.

3. No more than five irregulars are available for the whole game. Once one is lost, it remains eliminated.

4. During combat they may not combine their attack strength with other nationalities unless stacked with a Greek Regular.

F. Adding the RAF and the Royal Navy

The RAF could have tried to return to Crete. The bombers represent Wellington and Blenheim bombers based along the Nile.

1. Allied RAF units available:

Turn #12:

on any night turn, starting Turn #12:
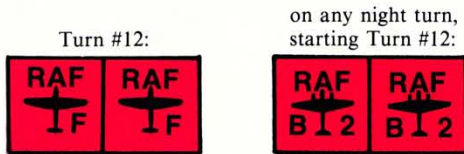
2. The fighters must be placed on a friendly airfield, out of enemy ZOC. The bombers arrive from out of play and return out of play as do the German aircraft type units.

3. The Allied bombers may attack only airfields and German aircraft units that are out of play. Only an "N-2" result will affect an airfield or cause elimination of German aircraft units (only one elim per turn).

4. If any Allied unit evacuates all Allied fighter units immediately evacuate.

5. The following are additional air missions. Both players may conduct any or all air missions.

a. Fighter Interception of any other air mission—This mission is flown during the opposing player segment phase. Fighter units will fly from base and announce "interception" of mission. Fighters may intercept only once in a game turn.

(1) Interception of fighters: Unit for unit cancellation of mission.

(2) Interception of fighter-bombers: Unit for unit cancellation of mission.

(3) Interception of bombers: Unit for unit cancellation of mission.

(4) Interception of paratroops: The fighter cancels its mission and the paratroop unit affected must add "3" to drift die roll result. All other paratroop units in the sector must add "1" to drift die roll result.

(5) Interception of airlanding: One fighter unit will reduce airfield capacity by two stacking points for that turn only. Place the fighter unit on the airfield hex as though on an interdiction mission. Both missions may be conducted simultaneously.

(6) There is no combat result during interception. Cancelled units are immediately returned to base.

b. The dropping of paratroops or landing of airborne reinforcements is considered as an air mission.

c. Fighter escort—Fighters may be assigned to a sector as a general escort to all air missions being flown there. They may not conduct other missions in the same player segment. Intercepting fighter units must conduct fighter interception before remaining interceptors can affect other air missions.

d. Bombing of airfield—Conducted by bombers or fighter-bombers this mission is resolved on the Bombardment Table. A "neutralized" result means the airfield is unusable. Regardless of first result the die is rolled again for elimination of aircraft units

that were based on that airfield. An "N-1" means one unit eliminated. An "N-2" means two units are eliminated. Only "N-2" results have an effect during NIGHT.

6. OPTIONAL: THE ROYAL NAVY

On two separate occasions the Royal Navy raided Axis held airfields. One of these was Maleme airfield.

a. The Allies have available for two NIGHT turns a naval bombardment strength of four points. This strength must be applied all together as one raid (attack) against one target: an airfield or German aircraft units out of play.

b. The raid must be planned on the Time Record Track at least two turns in advance although the target need not be decided until that turn.

c. The naval raid is resolved in the same manner as the bomber attack against an airfield. The bombers and navy may combine strength against the same target.

INVASION OF MALTA—1942

The game situation as found in the rules booklet is really the Spring 1942 Plan. This invasion would have taken place in late May or early June thereby delaying Rommel's offensive against the Gazala Line and Tobruk. The Spring 1942 Plan was not the only plan. The remaining important plans are shown below.

A. The 1940 Plan

This was a scaled down version of the Pre-War Plan. In common with that plan, it lacked equipment and trained men. In this plan 20,000 men (no Germans) were to be landed from 100 landing craft and four "tankers" at Marsa Scala, St. Thomas Bay, and Marsa Scirocco and were to be followed by an attack against Mellieha Bay and St. Paul's Bay. An early September attack date is assumed.

1. Axis Organization:

a. There are only two paratroop units:
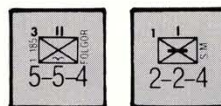
b: There are no airlanding units.

c. Use the same Sea Assault units but delete the 10° RCC (3 units).

d. There is no Follow-up Convoy #2 or #3.

e. Use all the Italian airforce and add German units (to represent added Italian strength) of two fighters and two bomber strength points.

2. Allied Organization:

(Allied player receives only these units)

within 2 hexes of Valletta | Luga Airfield | Hal Far Airfield

in Valletta | anywhere
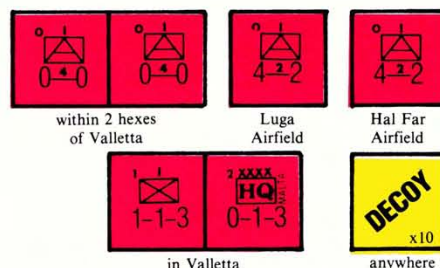
Place all coast artillery as before but delete these three units:
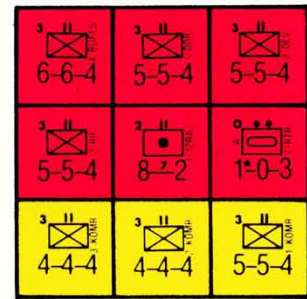
3. Other Rules:

a. Both the paratroops and the 1st sea assault convoy land on the first turn.

b. The Axis player may form one or two assault convoys from the sea assault units available. The second assault convoy arrives second or third turn as desired but at a different beach.

c. The Follow-up convoy arrives starting Turn #4. It may go to either landing beach as desired. Only 8 stacking points per turn may land.

d. Krendi and Kirkop airfields cannot be used.

e. One Allied heavy artillery unit must be placed adjacent to Grand harbour. It represents the heavy guns of the *HMS Terror*. It may attack only enemy units landing at Valletta Beach or St. Paul's Bay Beach.

f. No Allied RAF is possible in this scenario.

B. The 1941 Plan

In April 1941 the Axis had a choice, either occupy Crete as the end of the successful Balkans campaign or seize Malta to insure supply lines to Rommel's Afrika Korps. On April 21st Gen. Student persuaded Hitler to attack Crete, but what if Hitler accepted the earlier recommendation by the Wehrmacht Operations Staff to capture Malta? This plan was to employ one para division, one airborne division, some specialist units, and some 40,000 men to be landed by sea from 180 small craft. The first invasion wave however, would have 4000 men in another 100 special assault landing craft largely obtained from the now cancelled Operation "Sealion". Generally, it was intended that the amphibious landing would be a subsidiary effort. Players are cautioned that this scenario is heavily weighted in favor of the Axis.

1. Axis Organization:

a. Use all the paratroop units shown on the CRETE Axis Organization Card. Units will drop on the turn shown and they may drop anywhere. Company substitution is used. Add the Italian paratroop units as found in the 1940 Scenario.

b. The only airlanding units are the rest of the Italian "Folgore" Division.

c. The Follow-up convoys are the same but there is no Follow-up convoy #3. Also, delete the 557th anti-tank unit and the 1st and 2nd CCNN battalions.

d. Delete three German fighter aircraft units and six bomber strength points.

2. Allied Organization:

a. Delete the following units:
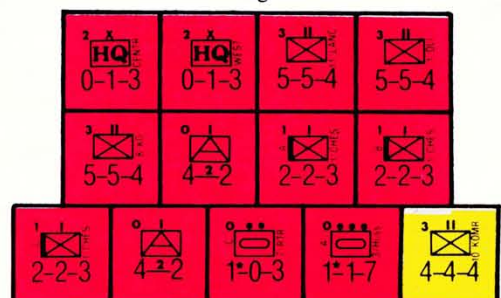
b. The fortress companies, beach defense companies, coast artillery, AA units, and headquarters units will set up as before. All remaining units may set up anywhere desired.

3. Other rules:

a. Kirkop and Krendi airfields cannot be used. The Kirkop AA unit will set up on Hal Far Airfield.

b. There is no paratroop withdrawal.

c. No casualty points are awarded for eliminating Italian units of the "Folgore" Division that entered play by airlanding procedure.

d. OPTIONAL: Allied player has two fighter units available. Use all aircraft rules as found in *CRETE* Scenario D.

e. OPTIONAL: Since there is no attack on Crete, the Allies might base long range bombers on Crete. This causes one extra unit to be lost on any "delay" result on the Malta Follow-up Convoy Table.

C. Variations on the Spring 1942 Plan

Players can mix and match these situations to suit needs. Each variation can stand by itself and none are mutually exclusive. It would also be permissible to use any of these options in the July 1942 Plan.

1. ADDITIONAL ALLIED UNITS

If the Allies had less trouble with the January 1942 relief convoys more men and equipment might have arrived. The additional units shown below might have been raised.

a. Add the following units:
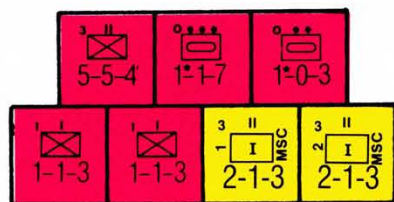
Place anywhere desired. Borrow some counters from Crete.

b. The two "MSC" units (Maltese Special Constabulary) were essentially the Maltese equivalent of the British Home Guard. They cannot combine their attack strength with any units at all.

2. AXIS ARMOR

The "coup de main" variation of the Spring 1942 Plan evisioned the use of less men in the whole operation. The more interesting aspect, though, was the use of armor.

a. Armored units available:
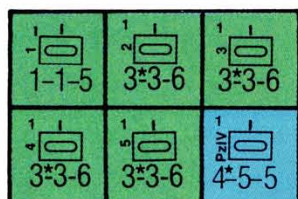
b. The Axis player may decide how many armor units he wishes to use of those available. Armor units may enter play only in the Follow-up convoys. Since all the available shipping space has already been filled the Axis player must leave behind in Italy two stacking points (his choice of units) for every armored unit taken. The stacking points must be removed from that convoy the armored unit is placed in. In addition, one extra stacking point is subtracted from the convoy merely for having armor (represents supply vehicles).

c. The German PzIV unit will cause "NH" results to be "DR" unless the Allied heavy tanks are defending.

3. AXIS NAVAL BOMBARDMENT

This variation is similar to the Royal Navy "Raid" as shown in the *CRETE* Scenario D except these Italian warships would be available only once.

a. This naval bombardment may be made on any daylight turn except the first. The exact turn must be planned on the Time Record Track before the start of play.

b. These eight bombardment points are used just like an air bombardment mission by aircraft units but only airfields, forts, or batteries may be bombarded and there is no effect against infantry type units.

c. Naval bombardment may not be within a 3 hex range (5 hex diameter) of an Allied heavy coast artillery unit.

d. Naval bombardment may combine with aircraft strength points.

4. RAF

a. Use all the aircraft rules as found in *CRETE* Scenario D.

b. The Allied player has only one fighter available and this unit may fly only on morning turns.

D. July 1942 Plan

If Rommel had halted after the capture of Tobruk this plan would have been used. It is much the same as the Spring 1942 Plan but includes additional units and preparations.

1. Axis Organization: Add the following units:

a. Parachute units, anywhere, Turn #2, #3, or #5:
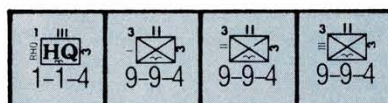
b. Add to any Follow-up Convoy:
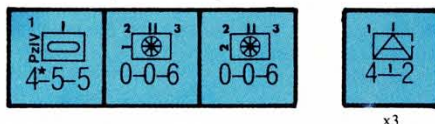
c. Special Assault Convoy:
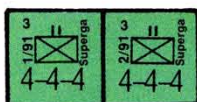
2. Allied Organization: The same but *MALTA* variations C-1 and C-4 are recommended.

3. Other rules:

a. Consider all German units on Turn #1 to be glider units.

b. Consider Krendi airfield as destroyed.

c. The Special Assault Convoy is a second "Assault Convoy" which is planned at the beginning of the game for any turn after Turn #6. It arrives automatically and does not create a beachhead.

d. The German PzIV unit will cause "NH" results to be "DR" unless the Allied heavy tanks are defending. It does not displace any Axis unit because of shipping shortages (see MALTA Scenario C.2).

4. OPTIONAL: NO GOZO INVASION

Coincident with the July 1942 Plan was to be the invasion of Gozo, the island just a few miles northwest of Malta. Few Allied troops held the island so it would really be more of a quick occupation than a battle. But what if the considerable force scheduled to land there were to attack Malta instead?

a. Add the following units to the Special Assault convoy shown above:
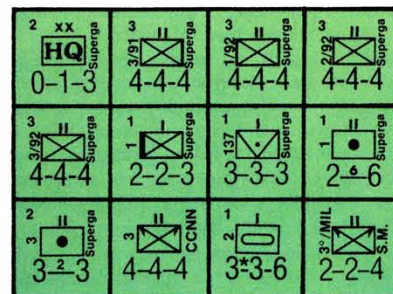
b. The Axis player must divide all the units available for the Special Assault convoy into three parts: the assault group and two special follow-up convoys. No more than 10 stacking points may be in each group. The commando unit must be in the assault group and lands according to the Italian Commando rule.

c. The assault group must attack some beach other than that one the regular Assault Convoy attacked.

d. The two special follow-up convoys arrive starting Turns 8 and 14 respectively.

e. The regular Follow-up convoys may not land at beachhead markers created by the Special Assault group nor may the special follow-up convoys land at the beachhead markers created by the regular Assault Convoy.

5. OPTIONAL: NIGHT AIRBORNE ATTACK

As a variation on the Italian plan the German command explored the possibility of making a preliminary nighttime drop. This was to be a reinforced glider battalion led by Col. von der Heydte. It was hoped that he could do considerable damage before the British command was alerted.

a. This attack is conducted during the night before the first regular turn of the game. Add a pre-game NIGHT turn before the start of the first regular game turn.

b. The Allied player sets up as before.

c. The Axis player selects a force out of those available for Turn #1 of no more than six German parachute companies. Battalion counters may be substituted with company counters only so far as to obtain this force. These are the only units allowed to land on the pre-game turn.

d. The game now begins with the landing of these units. The units may be targeted to land on rough terrain.

e. While resolving drift subtract "2" from drift die roll result for all these units except those targeted to land on rough terrain (use normal table). There are no other adjustments to this die roll regardless of the number of AA units and other units in the target hex.

f. After drift is resolved, any Axis unit that landed on its targeted hex even after drift combat may be moved during Axis movement phase this turn and may attack. No Allied unit is ever revealed unless attacked.

g. Only those Allied units adjacent to an Axis unit may be moved. They may move only one hex and only they may attack.

h. The first turn of the game proceeds normally from this point.

Indicators

Tournament (Strategic) Level Russian Campaign

By Tyrone Bomba

Almost any game can be the subject of a myriad assortment of variations and rule changes by a player who perceives such and such a rule as unrealistic from his vantage point. RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN is no exception and while we found most of Tyrone's suggested changes to be no better or worse than the normal fare, it was the author's covering letter which got our attention. What really got this article into print was the author's appended statement that he had heard that AH had no capacity for criticism, especially self-criticism, and that he had ten bucks riding on our acceptance of the article. Collect your money, Tyrone.
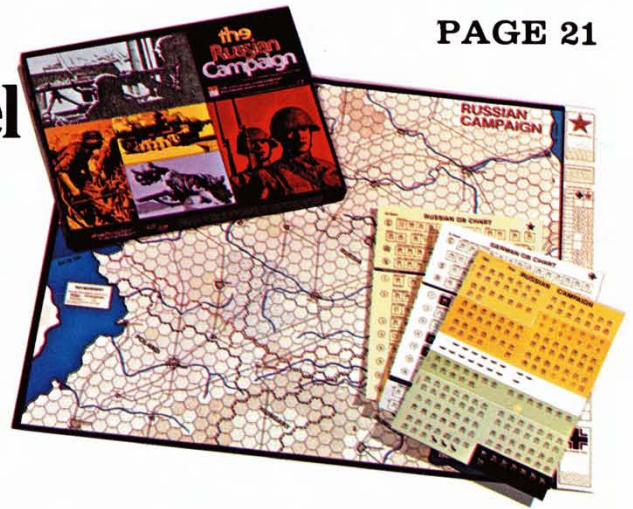
The following set of rules additions, deletions and changes, is meant to serve as the "Tournament", or "Strategic", level version of Avalon Hill's second edition *Russian Campaign* game. Unlike most tournament level game versions, this one does not make its parent game more cumbersome or complex to play in any serious way. Instead, the variant was designed to try and show that many strategic level games can be brought more in tune with their historical realities without having to resort to all manner of play complexities. At the end of the new rules section I provide my rationale for the changes.

INTRODUCTION: The following rules are intended to be used in conjunction with Avalon Hill's 1977 rules of *Russian Campaign* (second edition). Except where herein amended, deleted or added to, those rules still apply in full.

OPTIONAL AND WHAT IF RULES: Optional rules 26.2, 26.21, 26.4, 26.6 and 26.7 lose their optional status and become mandatory rules in this version of the game.

Rule 26.3 likewise loses its optional status, but is changed to read as follows: "Every individual armored unit used to attack major cities or forest hexes has its combat factor reduced by one factor for the purpose of computing the battle odds of that attack."

"What If" rules I and II also lose their optional nature and are fully incorporated into this game version.

Concerning rules 26.5 and 26.8, players should still feel free to choose whichever weather resolution system best fits their temperaments.

COMBAT RESULTS TABLE: The combat result "C" is done away with. The "C" result in the 1-4/1-3, 1-2 and 1-1 odds columns is now considered to be an "AR" result. The "C" result in the 2-1, 3-1 and 4-1 columns is now considered to be a "DR" result.

MOVEMENT ALLOWANCE CHART: A unit's movement factor in the first impulse of a turn, as determined by the weather, is precisely the same in the second movement phase of that turn. Units starting their second movement phase in an enemy zone of control may still *not* move on the second impulse. (Players using weather rule 26.8 note: each impulse's weather roll effects a unit's movement factor as if it was a first movement impulse.)

DELETIONS: Rules 14.4 and 16.3 are entirely deleted from the rules.

AUTOMATIC VICTORY: Change rule 16.2 to read, "Units taking part in the 10 to 1 attack cannot move any further that impulse and may not attack any other enemy units for the remainder of that *impulse.*"

MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS: Change rule 8.1 to read as follows:

"Units must pay an additional movement point to enter a woods, mountain or swamp hex. They *may* continue moving as long as they have enough movement points to pay these terrain costs.

EXCEPTIONS: Infantry and Mountain units do not have to pay the extra movement factor to enter a woods hex. Mountain units do not have to pay the extra cost to enter mountain hexes. Swamps are treated as clear terrain in snow months."

TERRAIN EFFECTS CHART: Change the "EFFECT ON MOVEMENT" column for mountain hexes to read, "Units must expend one additional movement factor per mountain hex entered. Exception: Mountain units."

Change the "EFFECT ON MOVEMENT" column for woods hexes to read, "Units must expend one additional movement factor per woods hex entered. Exception: Infantry and Mountain units." (Also note: woods no longer have any effect on combat except as outlined in the new 26.3)

Change the "EFFECT ON MOVEMENT" column for swamp hexes to read, "Units must expend one additional movement point per swamp hex entered. Exception: treat as clear terrain during snow turns."

Add the following to the "EFFECT ON COMBAT" column for rivers: "Treat as clear terrain during snow months."

To further clarify the above new movement rules: For example, a unit with a movement factor of four could travel through two swamp hexes in a movement impulse, paying the normal cost of one movement point per hex entered, plus one penalty point per hex because the hexes are swamps.

ADDITIONS: Add the following to the appropriate section of your rulebook.

25.3 All Italian units are removed from the game board at the end of the July/August 1943 game turn. They may never re-enter play. (This is a final limit on Italian participation in the war, no matter which "what-ifs," if any, are being used.)

25.4 If Finnish units are still in the game at the end of the Sept/Oct 1944 turn, remove them permanently from play.

27 WINTER FREEZE UP

27.1 During snow turns all rivers and lakes on the board freeze.

27.2 During snow turns the seven lakes on the northeast quadrant of the board (The board quarter with Moscow on it, containing lakes Ilmen, Ladoga, Onega, the two unnamed lakes and the Finnish lakes) freeze. During these turns it becomes possible to move across and stop on these frozen bodies of water (players may find it convenient to pencil in the hex pattern) as if they were clear terrain.

27.4 Units may mount attacks and overruns from a frozen all-lake hex.

27.5 If a unit is on an all-lake hex when the weather changes from snow to some other condition, the opposing player immediately moves it to the lake shore hex of his choice (only to a shore hex of that particular lake of course).

27.6 Units may retreat across frozen lakes, and retreating units may end their retreats on frozen lakes.

27.7 Units on frozen lake hexes may be attacked and overrun in the normal manner.

28 FORTIFIED CITIES

28 Both players may fortify major cities.

28.1 The act of fortifying a major city takes place at the end of a player's second movement impulse. To indicate the fortification, simply flip the effected units over. All units in the hex of a city that is to be fortified must take part in the act of fortification.

28.2 All friendly units which subsequently enter and remain in that city at the end of the owning player's turn also enter the fortified state and are flipped over.

28.3 Normal stacking restrictions still apply to units in fortified cities.

28.4 Units in a fortified city may unfortify at any point in the owning player's movement impulses. If more than one unit is in the fortified city, the owning player may choose to unfortify only one, all or some of those units and move them away. However, all friendly units which are in a major city hex containing at least one fortified unit, at the end of the owning player's turn, are likewise fortified. A major city is either entirely fortified or entirely unfortified, there is no in between state.

28.6 There is no movement penalty involved in the acts of fortifying or unfortifying, and the act may be done even if the enemy units are adjacent.

28.7 Units fortified in a major city lose their zone of control. That is, they no longer project a ZOC outside the city hex they are in, and units outside that city hex, both enemy and friendly, no longer project a ZOC into the city. Such fortified units are therefore no longer required to attack adjacent enemy units, and adjacent enemy units are not required to attack into a fortified city. If, however, the owning player decides to use his fortified units in an attack, he must immediately unfortify them and conduct a normal attack. Likewise, enemy units attacking into a fortified city must attack all units in that city.

In addition to the above effects, units fortified inside a major city may ignore "DR" results when attacked. Simply read such results as no effect. "D1" and "EX" results carry no retreat penalty for defending units in a fortified city (And units involved solely in an attack on units in a fortified city do not suffer the retreat portion of "A1" results.). All other combat results are normally applied.

28.8 Units in fortified major cities may not be overrun.

28.9 Minor cities may *not* be fortified.

This is the end of the rules for *Tournament Level RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN.* What follows is an explanation of their use and historical significance.

TO WHICH WE REPLY . . .

To preface a discussion about this variant, I will say that there are many good ideas presented here, and some that are not so good. Regardless of how good the individual ideas may be, however, they are not likely to be incorporated into any future rulebook, for two reasons: the first, and most important reason, is that many people already have the old version of the rulebook, and revising the rulebook even to include good rules would lead to confusion and to the creation of two groups of players who really could not play *TRC* against each other because they would have become accustomed to playing with very different rules (make no mistake, the rules expounded here would change *TRC* drastically); and second, no minor reason, is that the new rules would have to be thoroughly playtested for balance before they could be released, which is no small task. Thus, regardless of the virtues of these rule changes and how much I may like them, the *TRC* rules will remain as they are. As an example of this, merely consider the additional optional rules and "What If" rules that were added to the second edition of the rulebook; some of these rules are so good that they should really have been incorporated into the main rules, but in order to keep the play of the game the same the new rules were all made optional.

Now, on to the discussion of the variant at hand! I will handle the suggested changes in the order they are proposed.

First the optionals and "What If" rules. I agree, use 'em all except for weather, and change that to your taste. Rule 26.3—the city and woods attack rule—is the only one that poses a problem, and the proposed change is probably good *except* that, given the other rules changes that are proposed below, and that greatly favor the Axis, the Russians are probably going to need the full effect of rule 26.3 as it is now to have a chance of winning the game. In other words, the modified 26.3 proposed here is probably a more reasonable rule (although the armored corps in the game really do represent extremely high concentrations of almost pure armor—each armored corps represents two panzer divisions), but it is probably necessary to keep the rule as it is—and use it—in order to give the Russians a chance to survive.

Deleting the "C" result is simply a bad idea, however. The "C" result does not represent the case where two opposing forces merely make contact—it represents the case where the battle between two forces has no definite winner, and this is *more* likely to occur on the strategic scale than on the tactical scale. Consider: a large force in a large hex has reserves and space that it can use before it is forced to retreat; it is much less "brittle" than a small tactical force that must vacate an area if it does not eliminate its opponent. Opposing tactical forces a kilometer apart must resolve the battle or be eliminated by continuous casualties; strategic forces over a large area can have many resting periods out of immediate combat, but still be fighting for the same piece of real estate.

I'll add an idea of my own here, however—allow the attacker to retreat at his option on a "C" result.

Upping the second impulse movement is not a good idea, either, but it does work towards the problem of too-slow movement—which is a problem, as Mr. Bomba accurately points out (of course, using an unopposed advance as a test case is a bit unfair, since the game is meant to recreate the situation in an opposed advance—but the point still stands). The problem with the proposed change is that it allows the Axis too much flexibility for their second—impulse attacks; as it is now the Axis must

get into positions on their first impulse to make their second-impulse attacks, and this is a good feature both for playability and for realism. Nonetheless, the units should have the extra movement capability—so why not make a "strategic movement" rule to cover the problem? I would propose that if a unit does not start nor end in an enemy ZOC on the first impulse, it could use its first and second impulse movement allowances; and if it does not enter any enemy ZOC (if it starts in ZOC it cannot move at all, of course) on the second impulse, then it can move using its first impulse movement factors.

14.4—no retreat from woods—strikes me as a good rule and I would keep it; the woods may not be wall-to-wall trees, but they do provide cover and defensive advantages, if only because of decreased visibility for an attacker entering an area. However, I would like to see the retreat allowed as an option—the player who should retreat (except for the woods) can stay in play or he can retreat 1 or two hexes if he wishes, selecting the retreat route himself.

The changes in the Automatic Victory rules are the killers. This is a perfectly good rule—after all, it was in the first JEDKO edition of the game—but it really gives the advantage to the Axis. The number of AVs in the game should quadruple or more (counting first-impulse AVs by units that are not deterred since they cannowattack again and second-impulse AVs by units that are now available), which means more Axis penetration attacks *and* more irreplaceable Russian surrendered units. Nonetheless, it's a good rule, so use it—but the Russians will need something to help them out, like 26.3 in unadulterated form.

The changes in movement restrictions are very good, although once more they help the Axis more than the Russians; however, the statement should perhaps be changed (if it costs 2 MP to enter a woods hex it is *harder* to enter a single woods hex than in the old version), and there is a little unit differentiation that should be made here.

First, if a unit moves from a restricted hex to a restricted hex, it must pay an additional movement point. Thus a unit on clear terrain with one MP left can still enter a restricted hex.

Second, differentiate types of units as follows: Armor moves through swamps in the old way, stopping in the first hex entered, and woods and mountains are restricted for armor; mountain units treat only swamps as restricted terrain; infantry and cavalry treat swamps and mountains as restricted; panzer grenadier units treat woods, mountains and swamps as restricted; and HQs are not restricted at all (I mean, a few command cars can't drive through the woods?! What happens, the officers keep walking into the trees?).

Frozen rivers are a bad idea—I think. My understanding is that rivers were an obstacle due to the difficult terrain surrounding them, *not* because of the water per se. Of course, the water *was* an obstacle, and this rule would help the Russians more than the Axis, so you may want to include it anyway.

Deserting Italians and Finns—OK, but would the Finns have left if they had Leningrad as a prize? Either way sounds good.

Frozen lakes are a good idea, but ice thickness is a consideration. Use this modification, but limit the stacking in the new hexes created to one unit per hex; in practice neither side would put too many units in one place on the ice. In other words, stacking in hexes that are not playable during the summer months is one unit per hex in SNOW turns. When the ice melts, units on the ice should be placed on adjacent legal hexes (of the opponent's choice) .

I have been a great fan of *TRC* since its introduction to American hobbyists, in fact, my first copy was produced by Jedko of Australia. However, I've also recognized that the game, though generally well designed, contains many historical flaws and unnecessary complications. I believe that in "Tournament Level Russian Campaign," I have set these right.

Many of my rule changes were mandated by the fact that the designer(s) seem to have been slightly mixed up on just which elements of warfare are significant at the strategic level, and which elements are properly confined to lower levels of simulation. Indeed, in some places they seem to have been unsure at just what level, strategic or tactical, they wanted *TRC* to function as a game. (And just to clear up any confusion in the reader's mind, we should note that any game whose map stretches from Berlin to the Caspian Sea, at about 35 miles per hex, whose units represent corps and army sized formations, and whose game turns each equal two months of real time must, perforce, be a *strategic* simulation.)

To begin with then, I greatly reduced the effects of rule 26.3. As it read, 26.3 would have been a fine rule for any simulation operating with units somewhere below the division level. There is no doubt at all that groups of tanks have great difficulty trying to penetrate against urban or forest defenders. A tank corps or army is not, however, a group of tanks. It is, as are all properly outfitted corps sized units since Napoleonic times, a self-contained combat unit. True, its emphasis, its cutting edge, is clearly dominated by armor elements, but at the same time, sufficient support units in the form of infantry, artillery, combat engineers, etc., are organically attached to the parent corp. This was no fluke, but was one of the major factors bringing about the concept of the "corps" in western military thought. A corps, by definition, is a unit cable of independently operating in all types of terrain and combat environments. This is not to deny that armored corps operated more efficiently in flat, open country, but to penalize them with a loss of 50% of their combat capability is certainly an overstatement of the case. The designers were trying to play *PANZERBLITZ* at 35 miles per hex, and it just doesn't hold up.

I dropped the "contact" result from the odds chart for much the same sort of reason. A battalion, or similar sized unit, operating in a small area, searching for other life-sized enemy units, during, say, a 24 hour period, might achieve such a result for its efforts. They might succeed in finding the frontal elements of some nearby enemy position. Imagine, though, a situation where, for example, the Soviet 1st Gd., 2nd Gd., 6th Gd., 1st, 3rd and 4th Tank Armies roll up against the German 48th and 52nd Panzer and Panzer Grenadier Corps near Kaunas. For the better part of two months, a fierce mechanized clash whirls over the White-Russian countryside. At the end of that time, the Soviet commander reports to STAVKA, "Comrades! It is with much socialist zeal and patriotic pride, etc., etc., that I report making contact with the enemy!" Phew! Perhaps, but I doubt it. The designers were trying to incorporate lower echelon problems and limitations in a game of vastly broad scope, and it doesn't work to any good effect, neither playability or historicity is well served.

My changes of the woods rules follow the same pattern of thought. At the small unit level, encountering some well emplaced enemy unit in a thick copse of trees can certainly throw a delay into the day's battle plan. With hexes of this size, however, we cannot actually visualize woods hexes to be 35-mile-deep, tree-to-tree copses. They are forests, thick here and thin there, offering different

degrees of cover and resistance to penetration at many different points. To allow the woods rule to stand as presently constituted would have been to lend a fortress-like quality to most of northern Europe's surface area.

By the same token, I've added the city fortification rule in acknowledgement of the fact that the campaign, even at so huge a scale of simulation, could bog down to siege, frontal assault, and months-long stalemate. These incidents occurred, without fail, at the big cities. Drives which had maintained their momentum, against all opposition for hundreds of kilometers, could suddenly crash to a halt upon reaching the gates of some determinedly defended urban center. Mere mention of Leningrad, Odessa, Sevastapol, Stalingrad and Warsaw should make my point.

Likewise, I froze the rivers and lakes simply because all the rivers and lakes shown on the board freeze up in real life every winter. And an infantryman, charging across snow-covered ice, or a tank rolling across, hardly knows the difference. (Admittedly, I am a little weak on this one, but fellows, do you really think it's necessary to start dealing with riverbank elevation and depth-of-ice rules? I don't)

My changes to the overrun rule should, by this point, be self-explanatory and obvious. Soviet tank corps did not hold up panzer groups for two months, nor would the fact that some other Soviet unit existed in the area after the completion of an overrun operation in any way tempt the victorious commander to offer up his sword in surrender. (If you need more corroboration, see *FIRE & MOVEMENT* magazine, issue 10, for an interview with John Edwards, *TRC's* original creator, who says much the same thing about AH's presentation of this rule.)

The Finnish and Italian units have been given definite end-of-participation dates simply because all my reading tends toward the idea that those two nations had serious limitations on their commitment to Barbarossa, and if victory still eluded the Axis by the dates given, both their wills and means to resist would have ended that commitment.

My most drastic change, without doubt, has been to do away with movement reductions on non-engaged units in the second impulse. And again, this is simply because the movement rules as originally presented, are not only unnecessarily cumbersome, they are totally unhistoric, in that they create snail-like rates of march. The distance between Dnepro-Petrovsk and Stalingrad, for example, is about 475 miles. Going by the old rules, marching *unopposed,* four months would be needed by a German infantry corp to go that distance. That's a march rate of about 4 miles per day. I'll say no more.

My guide in making all these changes, then, has been a fairly wide knowledge of the historical campaign itself, and the possibilities realistically inherent in it, and a clearer grasp of where tactical considerations must be left behind and strategic principles picked up, than I think was shown by *TRC's* producers. I invite the readers to be the final judge.

Playing *"Tourney RC"* you'll find, I think, that a well-run German offensive in 1941 can seize both Leningrad and Moscow. This is a valid result, as I'm convinced that a better run German campaign could have done just that. At the same time though, Soviet players will find themselves equally able to simulate the huge Russian counterthrusts, setting up whole army groups for destruction at one shot. I'll gladly receive your opinions at: 6931 Security Squadron, Box 402, APO NY 09291.

ANOTHER LOOK AT THIRD REICH

By David James Ritchie

The time is Spring, 1943. Most of Europe is at war. In the east, the armies of the Reich are in possession of Leningrad, Moscow and much of the Don Basin. France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Yugoslavia, Greece, Poland and the Baltic States have all fallen before Hitler's Blitzkrieg. The Afrika Korps lies astride the last British defensive line at Alamein. Malta is an Italian naval base. Spain has joined the Axis along with Hungary, Finland, Rumania and Bulgaria. Gibraltar has fallen. German U-boats have cut Great Britain off from its empire and all but eliminated the British lifeline to an America which is just beginning to affect the course of the war. The British and Russian war industries have been shattered. As Summer creeps over the continent, the Axis prepares the final great offensive bid for European hegemony: a two-pronged drive on Persia via the Levant and Trans-Caucasia. All that stands between the Reich and ultimate victory is a thin red line of Commonwealth troops entrenched before Cairo and Alexandria.

Of course, that is hardly the way it happened. In reality, by Summer of 1943 the Axis was on the defensive throughout Europe and what offensive actions were in the offing were little more than desperate fantasies. The strategic momentum of the European war had shifted to the Allied side and it would never really shift back to the Axis. The foregoing portrait is not, however, the fevered fantasy of some exiled SS man sweltering in a steaming jungle compound in Paraguay. It is an accurate description of the situation faced by many an Allied player in Avalon Hill's *RISE AND DECLINE OF THE THIRD REICH*. With some inconsequential variations, this situation is a common result of what seems to be a Pro-Axis Strategic Bias in the game design.

In several hundred games of *TR* this writer has seen numerous Decisive Axis Victories. On only two occasions, however, has an Allied player achieved a Decisive Victory. Generally, the Allies seem to have some trouble achieving even minimal victory conditions. The problem may not, of course, lie with the construction of the game. It may simply be that the game accurately portrays a situation in which the Axis should by all rights be victorious, providing that the Axis player(s) avoids the strategic absurdities which characterized the historical conduct of the war. Whatever the cause, it is the rare Allied player who can even approximate the Allied momentum of the last two years of the war in which the war continued only because the obviously beaten Axis continued fighting mechanically out of an unwillingness to accept Unconditional Surrender as a worthwhile option.

For those who have experienced a similarly unbalanced situation, the ensuing discussion may be just what the doctor ordered. Included are a number of suggestions for rule alterations designed to widen the strategic options of both sides plus some corrections in *TR's* portrayal of terrain. Some slight additions are also made to TR's OB. The general effect of the suggested alteration is to decrease the ability of the Axis to totally dominate the game without hampering the fluidity of movement which is so necessary to the Axis blitzkrieg. Players may wish to apply the entire package or they may simply pick from among the suggestions offered those which deal with their most persistent problems.

1. MAPSHEET ALTERATIONS

While there is something very appealing about all of those vast stretches of clear terrain hexes on the board, there is also something very sinister about their effect on the game. It is somewhat disturbing to see one's enemy rampaging through clear terrain hexes which should contain some of the roughest mountains in Europe, totally oblivious to the fact that his blitz should be impossible. The experience can be especially painful when one sees an opponent blithely (and purposelessly) invading some neutral which is easy pickin's mainly because of a failure to include pertinent terrain. The following terrain alterations are, therefore, suggested.

Casablanca, Tunis, Tangier and Helsinki (or, for the literal minded, Hango, the hex due west of Helsinki) should all be ports. Also, the single beach hexes on both Crete and Cyprus should contain port symbols. There should be a crossing arrow between Suez and Port Said. There should also be a crossing arrow between Tangier and Gibraltar which is usable only by the player who controls Gibraltar. Attacks from Gibraltar to Tangier across the straits are permitted, but not attacks from Tangier to Gibraltar. Control of Tangier to Gibraltar does not convey the capability of interdicting SR between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. This capability is still vested solely in Gibraltar.

The northern entrance to the Crimea should be a marsh hex. This hex is the single land bridge running between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov two hexes north of Sevastopol. For those who have been burned by sneak invasions of the northern portion of the British Isles, neither Ireland nor any other island making up the British Isles is invadable except via beachhexes. The terrain in the northern island is far too rough to permit supply of any enemy force which could conceivably gain a lodgement (a debatable proposition in itself).

The following hexes are mountain hexes: Bilbao, Santander, the hex adjacent to and due west of Santander, Cordoba and the hex adjacent to and due east of Cordoba, the hexes adjacent to and NNW, NNE and west of Madrid, all non-coastal border hexes on the Tunisian side of the Tunisian-Algerian border, the hexes NNE and NNW of Venice and the two non-coastal border hexes on both sides of the Greek-Albanian border. While there are other hexes which could be classified as mountainous, these hexes were added for reasons of strategic balance as much as for purposes of realism.

Sevastopol should be classified as a fortress of the same type as Leningrad. It was often called Russia's Gibraltar and was, in reality, a far stronger position than Leningrad. The Germans were forced to bring up their powerful 600mm siege mortars in order to reduce the fortress and at least part of the delay in getting the German 1942 summer offensive going can be attributed to the toughness of Sevastopol. Similarly, Moscow and Stalingrad should be classified as Leningrad-type fortresses. Each was defended in approximately the same manner as Leningrad with bomb proof pill boxes scattered throughout the suburbs and separate defense lines guarding the approaches to the cities. While neither Stalingrad nor Moscow had Leningrad's complement of pre-war fixed fortifications, their wartime defense lines were, if anything, stronger than those found before Leningrad. Moscow, for example, was guarded by three separate defense lines, each constructed behind a

continuous anti-tank ditch the size of a small canyon.

It is possible to SR between controlled hexes on the northern board edge in Finland and controlled hexes on the northern board edge in Sweden and Norway. It is not, however, possible to move between these countries during normal movement. Nor is it possible to attack from Finland into either Sweden or Norway or vise versa. The nature of the terrain, weather and supply lines would have made such opposed movement impossible at the level at which the game is designed. Supply may not be drawn off the northern board edge between these countries for the same reason.

All Russian units draw supply from the eastern map edge of Russia. Russian units may not draw supply from any other source. Once a BRP pipeline has been opened to Russia via Persia, the British player may SR units (at a cost of 2 SR's into Persia from India and British units may draw supply from either Tabriz or Sarab. Only 8 strength points may be supplied from these sources. Until Leningrad has been captured, only 6 non-Finnish Axis strength points may be supplied from or through Finland. Vichy and Free French units may draw supply from any friendly city in a French colony.

2. FORCE POOL ADDITIONS

Should any player declare war on Iraq, the forces listed in Axis Minor Variation #1 are deployed against the aggressor. Should any player declare war on Portugal, one 1-3 and one 1-4 air unit are immediately deployed on Lisbon to represent the Portuguese army (which included some 20,000 veterans of the Spanish Civil War plus veterans of Portugal's colonial wars). Use Minor Neutral Forces. Once either Vichy France or any Vichy colony has been invaded by Allied forces which include 3 or more American land strength points, the British player may add two French 2-3's and one French 3-5 to his Force Pool to represent Gaulist forces. These units are in addition to other Free French forces which may already be available. Should Italy capitulate (see below) the British player may add one Italian –3 to his Force Pool.

3. BRP ADDITIONS

The Russian player receives 15 BRP's in Fall, 1941 to simulate the arrival of strong units of the Siberian army freed from guarding against a Japanese attack by the Pearl Harbor strike. The German player's initial BRP level for the Campaign Game is increased to 160 to simulate the forces kept secret during the Polish campaign (and thus undeployed). These include practically the whole airborne strength which was used against the West in 1940.

4. SWEDISH BRP's

The German war machine was dependent upon Swedish ore to an extent not commonly realized today. Yet, the strategic value of cutting off Germany's ore lifeline to Sweden was the single crucial factor in the British decision to invade Norway. Hitler had hoped to keep Norway neutral until the shadow of British operations against the Swedish ore boats from an interdiction base at Narvik forced his hand. To simulate the strategic possibilities inherent in a British blockade of Swedish ore, the German BRP total is reduced by 15 BRP's during any Year-Start Sequence in which either Stockholm or Bergen are British-controlled

or otherwise hostile toward Germany (i.e. invaded, but not yet conquered by the Axis). This reduction takes place prior to the calculation of BRP growth.

5. GENERAL WINTER

All lakes, rivers and marshes inside Russia are frozen over during Winter Turns. No Axis units receive any defense value from these terrain features during Winter Turns. During the first Winter Turn in which Russia and Germany are at war, the Axis undergoes an Attrition Attack at 31-40 on the Quarterly Attrition Resolution Table, regardless of the option chosen by the Russian player during that turn. This is a special effect of the first Russian winter and does not regulate any other action which the Russian player may wish to take. This effect is applied before the Russian player announces his option for the turn.

6. RUSSIAN OBJECTIVE HEXES

In an effort to offer some strategic reasons for an Axis offensive into southern Russia and to give the Axis some chance of killing off (instead of just crippling) the Russian bear, it is suggested that all Russian Objective Hexes be given a BRP value similar to that given Leningrad and Moscow. While this alteration would tend to favor the Axis, the alterations suggested in Section 5 more than counter-balance its effect. Loss of BRP's through terrain loss would be handled as described in 3.53 of the rules except that the following BRP values would be added to the loss possibilities:

1. STALINGRAD	15 BRP's
2. ASTRAKHAN	10 BRP's
3. MAIKOP	10 BRP's
4. GROZNY	10 BRP's
5. KHARKOV	5 BRP's
6. DNEPROPETROVSK	5 BRP's
7. SMOLENSK	5 BRP's

7. THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

One of the few areas in which *TR* bears no semblance of reality is in its treatment of the anti-Axis Resistance Movements. A feeble attempt is made to portray the highly visible, but relatively unimportant partisan warfare of the latter stages of the war in Europe. Yet, the game ignores the infinitely more far-reaching results of the non-partisan and often passive Resistance. In many cases, the BRP value of Minor Neutrals conquered by the Reich should be zero since the cost of fighting the Resistance and the effects of slow-down strikes, etc. was so great. In order to simulate in an abstract manner the continent-wide Resistance, the following system is suggested.

It costs 5 BRP's to activate the Resistance Movement in any country. All countries have a potential for resistance. Colonies do not. In all countries except Russia activation costs are paid for by the British player. Russian activation costs 10 BRP's and Russian Resistance may only be activated by the Russian Player. Once conquered, Russia loses all capacity for Resistance. Should Britain be conquered, the U.S. player takes over the payment of non-Russian activation costs for the Allies. Once activated, all non-Russian Resistance Movements continue to function automatically without the necessity of further BRP expenditure for the remainder of the game. Russian Resistance continues to function unless and until Russia is conquered and so long as there are Axis units anywhere in Russia.

All Resistance Activity is resolved during Year-Start Sequences. The Axis players add together the BRP value received by the Axis for all conquered countries which have an active Resistance Movement and multiplies the total by 25% (ignore all

fractions). The result is the number of BRP's not received by the Axis as a result of Resistance activity during that Year-Start Sequence.

When employing this rule, ½ the At Start BRP value of Russia is added to the total of BRP's received from countries with a Resistance Movement, despite the fact that no Russian BRP's are, in fact, received. This addition is made only after the Axis is at war with Russia and one or more Axis units occupy any hex in Russia. No Resistance Movement may be activated prior to Summer, 1940. Note: the area annexed by the Russians in 1939 is included as a separate nation.

The effect of this rule is to strain the resources of the Axis in a realistic manner via a relatively cheap form of strategic warfare. The rule should be used in conjunction with the partisan rule for maximum effect. Activation costs represent the reallocation of resources necessary to keep the Resistance supplied and, to some extent, the wastage of effort which resulted when the Axis periodically moved in on a Resistance Movement, using it for purposes of provocation or false intelligence. The Russian Resistance drained a substantial amount of non-Russian resources from the Axis war effort and the Germans never did get as much out of Russia as they put in, despite massive looting. Thus, once Russia is invaded, the Axis manpower and resource drain increases while no new resources are forthcoming. It should, perhaps, be noted in closing this section that Churchill felt the Resistance Movements to be Britain's most effective weapon during the period when Albion stood alone against Hitler.

8. ITALIAN CAPITULATION

During any Game Turn after Summer, 1943, Italy will capitulate to the Allies if the following conditions are met:

1. There are no Axis forces other than Vichy forces in Africa.

2. The Axis controls less than 200 BRP's worth of conquered nations and colonies.

3. The Allies have a functioning Bridgehead anywhere in mainland Italy (not merely Sicily) at the end of the Axis Player Turn.

When Italy capitulates, all Italian units are permanantly removed from the game except for one 2-3 unit which enters the British Force Pool. Germany immediately receives ½ of all available Italian BRP's. The rest are lost. Germany continues to receive BRP's for Italy at the beginning of each Year-Start Sequence in which the allies do not control Rome. Once Italy has capitulated, it is treated as a conquered nation under the control of Germany unless and until the Allies capture Rome. All Italian hexes not actually moved through by an Allied unit remain Axis-controlled. The Italian 2-3 deploys in any Italian city hex. It draws supply as a normal British unit.

9. AXIS MINOR ALLY DEFECTIONS

Once activated, an Axis Minor Ally may defect to the Allies. During any Turn in which the Russian player occupies the capital of an Axis Minor Ally that nation will join the Allies on a die roll of 1-4. Once an Axis Minor defects, all units of that nation outside of the country are destroyed. Those inside the country join the Allies immediately. All units of a defecting Axis Minor become part of the Russian Force Pool. The BRP value of the nation is subtracted from the Axis player's BRP total and added to the Russian BRP total as soon as the defection takes place. Should the Axis conquer a defected ally, all units of that nation are permanantly removed from the game and the nation is treated as a conquered Minor Neutral. Axis Minor Allies must have been activated in order to defect.

10. YUGOSLAVIAN ACTIVATION

During the Summer, 1941 Game Turn, the German player rolls one die for Yugoslavian activation. On a roll of 1-3 Yugoslavia joins the Axis as a Minor Ally. On any other die roll a coup takes place and Yugoslavia remains neutral. Should Yugoslavia remain neutral, Germany must immediately declare war on Yugoslavia. Should the German player refuse to declare war, Bulgaria and Rumania retain their status as Inactive Minor Allies and are never activated except as a result of Allied Declaration of War. Note: If Yugoslavia has been attacked previous to Summer, 1941, this rule may be ignored.

11. STRATEGIC WARFARE

Given the strength of the Axis during the early years of the war, any Axis player who cannot gain and keep the initiative in the area of strategic warfare has no business being anywhere near a wargame. The disparity in costs and performance between Axis and Allied strategic weapons, plus the usually strong Axis BRP position (allowing a comparatively greater number of Axis strategic builds over the Allies) makes it difficult to lose the U-boat war. The Axis player almost has to be willfully dense to fail to cripple Britain with submarines. Historically, the Germans were pretty dense in this area what with the diversion of large numbers of U-boats to the shallow waters of the Mediterranean (where they were less than useless) and the High Command's insistance (well after the fact had ceased to be in question among Kriegsmariners) that the Allied ASW could not be armed with 10cm radar sets. Even granting the relative stupidity of some German strategists when it came to the U-boat war, however, the fact is that by Spring of 1943, the U-boats were within a hair's breadth of cutting Britain off from both her empire and America and ending the war in the West. It was at that point that the Allies postponed all other operations and diverted maximum effort to winning in the North Atlantic. Aircraft carriers needed elsewhere were diverted to the Central Atlantic to close the aircover gap. Special hunting packs of destroyers were set up to operate offensively against the U-boats instead of simply escorting convoys. Aircraft production and pilot training were geared towards ASW missions and the Second Front nearly died on the vine due to the diversion of effort. Thus, the Allied solution to the U-boat war was a desperate diversion of maximum effort not provided for in the game system.

Just as the Allies had their strategic crisis, so too did the Axis. Their solutions were the same: the diversion of maximum effort to shore up the crisis point. In both cases, the diversion of effort amounted to far more than a paltry 10% of available resources.

To simulate the pace of strategic warfare and the real amount of effort expended on it, it is suggested that both the Allies and the Axis be permitted to declare a Strategic Crisis during any Year-Start Sequence in which that side loses more than 30 BRP's due to Strategic Warfare. Once a side declares such an emergency, it is still limited to the expenditure of 10% of its available BRP's on strategic warfare of an offensive nature (i.e. U-boats and SAC). However, it gains the ability to expend an unlimited number of BRP's on defensive strategic weapons (Interceptors and ASW). Once this ability has been attained by a side, it is retained for the remainder of the game. Thus, if Britain loses 34 BRP's due to U-boat activity during the 1942 Year-Start Sequence, the Allies may expend any number of BRP's on ASW during that Year-Start Sequence and all succeeding Year-Start Sequences.

Note: When employing this rule, British and American losses are added together to determine if a crisis has occurred.

While Germany withstood its trial at the hands of the Allied Bomber Command quite well, Britain could not have withstood the continual sinking of more merchant ship tonnage than was coming off the ways for very long. It is, therefore, suggested that the British be forced to seek peace during any Year-Start Sequence in which the British BRP level at year's start is less than 75. If Britain seeks peace, the Axis may decline to accept, in which case, nothing changes and Britain may not be forced to seek peace again. If the offer is accepted, all British units (including Free French) are removed from the game permanently. Britain is not, however, conquered. No BRP's or VP's are received for accepting a British peace proposal. American units may still deploy in Britain and any British-controlled nations or colonies which already contain American units. The Axis retains control of conquered British territory. British colonies which have not been conquered by the Axis and contain no American units become uninvadable neutrals (same status as Switzerland). Free French Colonies containing no U.S. units become Vichy. Once Britain has been forced to seek peace, the British Isles may not be invaded by the Axis and any Axis units in the British Isles or in British colonies which go neutral must vacate the area on the next Axis Player Turn or they are destroyed. The U.S. is still allied with Britain due to agreements regarding the Pacific war and it is assumed that British troops have been conveyed thence.

British surrender under this suggested rule involves the acceptance of a secret agreement by which the British withdraw from aggressive actions while the Axis loosens the blockade around Britain. It is assumed that the U.S. continues the war effort and that U.S. pressure forces a weakened Britain to accept occupation of much British territory by American troops. While not wholly realistic, the option allows some latitude in Axis strategy and actually plays quite believably.

12. CONCLUSION

The suggestions offered in this article may or may not constitute an improvement. They do, however, make for a much more subtle mixture of strategies while offering the Allied player a chance to punish the Axis a bit earlier in the game and, thus, pave the way for a real blitz similar to that which took France from the Axis. The realistic resource drain imposed on the Axis plus the disintegration of various allies possible under these options tend to keep the German player from building up an unassailable BRP position while providing for the superiority which gave the Reich its early successes. Generally, by mid-1943 the Axis is on the run and by mid-1945 the Allies are knocking at the gates of Berlin. A sharp Axis player can still, however, march to a Decisive Victory under these rules even though the more likely result of the war is the historically accurate one: unconditional surrender. Those who have been repeatedly victimized by smirking Axis players should appreciate the change in climate. As for those of us who have been able to consistently win with the Axis . . . it's about time we had a challenge.

SQUAD LEADER
SIMULTANEOUS   MOVEMENT

By Mike Chiappinelli

Simultaneous Movement variants are nothing new but few games are better suited to the beast than SQUAD LEADER as Mike Chiappinelli so ably points out. Readers who find themselves thirsting for even more realism after mastering the voluminous SL game system could do far worse than delve into the intricacies and added possibilities offered by Si-Move.

A controversy often arises in wargaming circles over the issue of realism vs. playability. Just how much realism should be sacrificed for the sake of playability and vice versa? As with all issues, there are those who limit themselves exclusively to one of the two extremes possible: in this case either 1) measuring a game's overall value by the degree to which it realistically simulates a situation, or 2) measuring a game's overall value by its playability, even if attained at the expense of realism. Fortunately, however, the number of extremists is small compared to the number of players that lie along the rest of the spectrum who favor getting as much realism and playability into a game as possible. And it is to these players that *SQUAD LEADER* is especially appealing in that the game probably offers the best balance between realism and playability that you can hope to find in a simulation of WWII infantry combat. Then why upset the balance by adding simultaneous movement? The reason is that, in the case of *SQUAD LEADER,* the scales can be tipped just a little to achieve much greater realism without the sacrifice of as much playability as you might think.

SQUAD LEADER is easily adapted to simultaneous movement for the following reasons: 1) each player turn is already conveniently divided into phases, 2) each hex contains a letter and number for easy identification, and 3) many of the scenarios involve the use of a relatively small number of units. Simultaneous movement also requires the addition of only a few basically procedural rules to the game system. In other words, a player can easily switch from playing the game as it is now to playing it with simultaneous movement without having to learn the rules to an entirely new game in the process.

The drawback to simultaneous movement is, of course, that some paperwork is needed which necessarily lengthens the playing time. However, the following advantages make it well worth the extra time and effort: 1) the number of command decisions facing each squad leader is increased, 2) quite a bit of uncertainty is created for each squad leader as he now needs to anticipate his opponent's move in order to plan his own, and 3) the game becomes a great deal more realistic without sacrificing too much playability. (The only detriment to playability will be that players will have to predesignate their moves prior to the execution of each phase, requiring a little extra time and patience.)

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

One *complete* turn will consist of 7 phases, *all* involving *dual* player participation. The player who would normally move first in the scenario will move first in *each* phase of each turn.

1) RALLY PHASE—Identical to the present rally phase.

2) PREP FIRE PHASE

a) Players simultaneously predesignate all prep fire.

b) Since fire is simultaneous, all attacks are executed at full strength regardless of the effect of enemy prep fire on firing units.

c) As stated earlier, the players who would normally move first in the scenario resolves his attacks first.

3) MOVEMENT AND DEFENSIVE FIRE PHASE

a) Only units which did not fire during the Prep Fire Phase can be predesignated to move.

b) After all prep fire has been resolved, players simultaneously predesignate the movement of their units by selecting the hexes they wish those units to occupy after movement has ended. A unit is free to take any route it wishes so long as it ends movment in its predesignated hex and does not exceed its movement factor.

c) Once both players have finished predesignating the units they will move, the procedure followed is identical to that described in rule 16, SEMI-SIMULTANEOUS MOVEMENT AND DEFENSIVE FIRE, found on pages 22 and 23 of the second edition rules in the optional rules section. Ignore rule 16.8. Once the player moving first has finished moving all his predesignated units, the procedure is repeated for the second player.

d) Defensive fire is *not* predesignated on paper.

e) Only *moving* units may be fired upon during defensive fire.

f) Units may defensive fire only if they did not fire during the Prep Fire Phase *and* have neither moved nor been predesignated to move during the movement portion of the phase.

g) Place a prep fire marker on any units which defensive fire. This will help players remember which units are still available to fire during the Advancing Fire Phase.

4) ADVANCING FIRE PHASE

a) After all movement and defensive fire has ended, players predesignate the fire of all units they have moved in this turn. (Moved units still fire at half strength.) Players may also predesignate the fire of any units which have neither prep fired nor defensive fired. These units may fire at full strength.

b) As in the Prep Fire Phase, all attacks are executed regardless of the effect of enemy fire during this phase on firing units.

c) After all fire has been resolved, remove all prep fire markers that were placed on units that either prep fired or defensive fired.

5) ROUT PHASE—Identical to the present rout phase.

6) ADVANCE PHASE

a) Players predesignate the advance of any of their units.

7) CLOSE COMBAT PHASE—Identical to the present close combat phase.

SPECIAL SITUATION RULES

1) The locations of new smoke counters, attempts to entrench, and the changing of building levels must all be predesignated.

2) Units which cannot reach their predesignated hex due to a loss in movement factors must end the movement phase as close to that hex as their

remaining movement factors allow. For example, suppose a squad is traveling together with a leader who breaks because of defensive fire. If the squad remains unbroken, it must continue moving in the direction of its predesignated hex even if it can no longer reach the hex due to the loss of the leader's bonus of two MF.

3) If units of both players have been predesignated to occupy the same hex during the Movement Phase, then the units of the player moving first in the phase may enter the predesignated hex while the units of the player moving last and the phase adjacent to that hex.

4) Units of the player moving last may still carry out a predesignated advance during the Advance Phase even if enemy units have just advanced into the hex they presently occupy. However, there is one exception. Units of the player moving last may not advance if they were predesignated to advance into the hex that the enemy units are advancing from. In this case, the units of the player moving last would remain stationary and enter into close combat with the enemy units that have advanced into their hex.

5) Players reveal the predesignated hexes of their moving units *after* the movement of each unit has ended.

6) When playing scenarios which include AFV's both players should move all their infantry, trucks, and jeeps first. Once this has been accomplished, both players should go back and move all their AFVs, executing any overruns in the process. Overruns can only be made against the hexes that infantry, trucks, and jeeps occupy after all non-AFV movement has been completed.

CONCLUSION

I suggest trying simultaneous movement first in Scenario 1, since players are probably most familiar with the play of this scenario and can best use it as a basis of comparison.

Fire and Movement pads containing ruled columns for identification of units, location, and target hex (Fire); and units, present location, final location, and advance (Movement) will facilitate the predesignation process so that each player can concentrate more on the increased number of decisions he now needs to make. For example, now a player not only needs to decide which units he will move, but, also, in what order he will move them. This gives a player the option to use a unit as a diversion to draw fire away from other units predesignated to move. Also, predesignation of fire forces players to carefully weigh priorities before deciding when and where to commit the fire of their units each turn.

Thus, anticipation becomes the key to success when using simultaneous movement. Without anticipating your opponent's move you won't be able to time your movement and fire to best advantage. The reason for this is that the outcome of each phase and of each turn no longer depends solely on your move, but, rather on how your move interacts with your opponent's yielding a very realistic portrayal of WWII infantry combat. Questions can be addressed to me at 19 Hollow Tree Rd., So. Norwalk, CT 06854.

WAR AT SEA AND THE RUSSIAN NAVY

By Sean Canfield

WAR AT SEA has been an extremely popular game for would-be variants designers. So far we've seen variants expanding the navies of all concerned, adding a French navy, German surface raiders, Italian Frogmen, the Caribbean Sea and Cape of Good Hope and a tie-in to sister game VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC. Sean Canfield has gone them all one better by adding the Black Sea and expanding the Russian navy. All of the variant counters discussed below as well as those utilized in earlier GENERAL variants (Vol. 13, #3, 14, #3, 14, #4) can be obtained for $2.00 as part of this issue's CRETE/MALTA/WAR AT SEA variant counter sheet from our mail order dept.

Of all the major prewar powers the Russians were conspicuously unfortunate, having suffered three major naval disasters in less than 40 years. The first was their defeat at Tsushima Strait by the Japanese in 1905, in which the entire Baltic Fleet was either sunk or captured. The second was the start of WWI which broke out before a major rebuilding program had made much progress. In addition, the two revolutions of 1917 and sabotage by the Germans and Anglo-French forces destroyed yet more ships and wrecked the morale of the navy. The last disaster was self inflicted by Stalin's purge of the high command in all military branches in 1937. The purges did as much damage to the Russian Fleet as anything that had happened before.

Another problem with which the Russians had to cope was that of geography. The Soviet Union is surrounded by four large bodies of water: the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and the Arctic and Pacific Oceans. Russia has always had to deploy its naval resources between four areas, which are separated by often-hostile territory. Once a ship is deployed in the Arctic, it is no easy matter to re-deploy it to the Baltic. After the defeat by the Japanese the Pacific had been maintained at a weak level, and there were only light forces in the Arctic. This left the Baltic as the main force, with the Black Sea Fleet somewhat lighter but also strong.

THE RUSSIAN NAVY

When the government began to rebuild the navy in 1922 it was obvious that a major and expensive job lay ahead. To add to the problems, many of the surviving ships were in very poor condition and had to be scrapped. It was decided to try to complete unfinished warships that had been laid down before the revolution, many of which were useless hulls, and, after thoroughly weeding these out, the Russians were left with the following:

SERVICEABLE SHIPS

3 battleships (in commission or refitting)

5 cruisers (2 in commission, 3 still under construction)

17 destroyers (10 in commission, 7 under construction)

19 submarines (not all in commission or complete)

The three battleships were rechristened with Marxist names. The *GANGUT* became the *OCTOBER REVOLUTION; SEVASTOPOL* became *PARIS COMMUNE;* and *PETROPAVLOVSK* became *MARAT.* All three mounted 12-12" guns and displaced 25,000 tons; all were modernized with oil-fired boilers, and at least one was re-engined. Their best feature was their guns which had a range of 25,000 yards. Accommodations were, however, terrible: extremely unsanitary, and very poorly ventilated.

The cruisers were a pathetic lot. They were retained more out of sentiment than for military value. Even after the cruisers were modernized they were still no match for foreign heavy cruisers in almost all categories.

1935 was the turning point for the Russian Navy, for it was realized Nazi Germany was the main enemy. Russia was alarmed by the growing strength of the German Navy. The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935 gave Germany the right to build up to 35% of the strength of the British Fleet in surface ships and up to 100% in submarines, and the Soviet Government therefore felt themselves forced to commence the first major warship program since 1917. Two heavy cruisers were laid down: the *KIROV* at Leningrad and the *MOLOTOV* at Nikolaev in the Black Sea.

The Kirov-class cruisers were built with much Italian assistance. A total of six of these cruisers were ordered between 1935 and 1939, each displacing 8800 tons. They mounted nine 7.1 inch guns which had a range of 39,000 yards. The *MAKSIM GORKI* was completed in Leningrad in December, 1940. The *VOROSHILOV* was finished in June, 1941—just one week before the German attack—for the Black Sea Fleet. The other two, *KALININ* and *KAGANOVICH* were ordered from the Koinsomolsk Yard on the Amur River in the Far East in 1939; they were completed in the middle of 1944.

With this navy the Russians were forced into the war in 1941. The three battleships were antiques and no match for their foreign counterparts. The new cruisers were fine ships but were few in number. Unfortunately for the Russians, their fleet was doomed to be penned up again as in WWI and consequently it played only a defensive role in the war against Germany.

I. CHANGES TO THE MAPBOARD
A. THE BLACK SEA

The Black Sea borders the Mediterranean and the ports Russia and Turkey. It is worth 1 POC to either the Allies or the Axis. The Black Sea does not come into play until turn three. Russian ships do not have to roll to enter the Black Sea. After turn 3 the Italian cruisers may enter provided the Mediterranean was controlled by the Axis on the previous turn. British ships are not allowed. Russia is the port for Russian ships, has 1 point of repair facilities and cannot be bombed. The repair facilities in Leningrad and Northern Russia remain the same. Turkey is the port for Italian ships. It has 2 points of repair facilities and cannot be bombed. It borders the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and is available starting on turn four.

B. THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

This is just an extension of the Mediterranean with POC remaining the same. It borders the Black Sea and the Ports Turkey and Alexandria. Alexandria has 2 points of repair facilities, cannot be bombed, and is an Allied port. It is available for Allied use at the beginning of the game.

II. ADDITIONAL UNITS

A. THE RUSSIAN BLACK SEA FLEET

Units: *Paris Commune* (3-3-3), *Molotov* (1-1-7), *Voroshilov* (1-1-7). The Russian Black Sea Fleet is available to the Allied player on turn three. The Allied Player does not have to roll for the entry of the ships, but they may never leave the Black Sea.

B. THE RUSSIAN BALTIC FLEET

Units: *Kirov* (1-1-7), *Maksim Gorki* (1-1-7)

The *Kirov* and the *Maksim Gorki* are available along with the *October Revolution* and *Marat* on turn three. A roll of 5 or 6 is required for each ship to enter the Baltic each turn. The Russian ships must always remain in the Baltic.

C. THE GREEK FLEET

Units: *Kilkis* (2-2-3), *Lemnos* (2-2-3)

The Greek Fleet belongs to the Allied player and is available on turn three; it must start based in Greece. The Greek ships remain under Allied control through the entire game and must be based in the Mediterranean. These battleships were the former American pre-Dreadnoughts *USS Mississippi* and *USS Idaho* which were bought from America in 1914. Each ship mounted 4-12" and 8-8" guns and had a displacement of 13,000 tons. Both ships were sunk in air attacks during the German invasion of Greece.

D. ADDITIONAL ITALIAN UNITS

Units: *Bolzano* (1-1-7), *Trento* (1-1-7), *Trieste* (1-1-7), *Aquila* (0-3-6²)

The Italian Navy had seven 8" cruisers: *Fiume, Gorizia, Pola, Zara, Bolzano, Trento,* and *Trieste.* The latter three were not in the original game, however they did take an active part during WWII, participating in the Battle of Cape Matapan and escaping unscathed. The Italian ships belong to the Axis player and are available on turn one.

The Italian Navy suffered from having to rely for air support upon an independent air force. In consequence Italy lagged behind other navies in the development of carriers. Plans to convert the trans-Atlantic liner *Roma* had been prepared in the middle of 1940. It was not, however, until the encounter between the Italian and British fleets off Cape Matapan on March 28, 1941, a disaster which the Italians ascribed to a lack of fighter protection, that orders were given to proceed with the project. Renamed the *Aquila,* the ship had a displacement of 27,000 tons, a speed of 30 knots, and operated fifty-one 'Re 2001' fighter aircraft. The ship was ready for sea trials when, at the Armistice on September 9, 1943, she was sabotaged by her crew and abandoned, to be captured by the Germans. The *Aquila* is available on turn seven. The airstrike factor is purely defensive and may be used only when the allied player is making an airstrike on the Italian Fleet in which it cancels out an equal amount of its attackers airstrike. The *Aquila's* airstrike may never be used for offensive purposes.

III. RULES CHANGES
A. AXIS AIR STRIKES

Turn three (1941) witnessed the invasions of Greece and Crete. The Germans needed air superiority in order to bring about the massive airborne invasion of Crete. The Axis player on turn three must place his airstrike counter in the Mediterranean.

B. DAMAGE CONTROL

Subtract one from each damage die roll caused by a hit from a Russian 3-3-3 battleship. This reflects the antiquated design of the Russian battleships.

The "Opponents Wanted" Survey

or,
What Are They Playing in Dubuque?

by   Gary Charbonneau

There are many measures of a game's popularity, all more or less imperfect. One such measure is gross sales. From the standpoint of the manufacturer, this is the only measure of popularity that really counts, since it is the only one which tells how many dollars each game has earned. It is, however, somewhat biased in favor of newer games, since hard-core gamers already tend to own the bulk of the older titles and certainly aren't about to go out and buy duplicate copies just to boost a game's popularity rating. In addition, a real turkey of a game with an attractive title or box cover may sell well for a while after it first appears, but, after one or two playings, be relegated to the closet to gather dust.

Another measure of popularity is the direct survey, such as that conducted by Avalon Hill with its "Reader Buyer's Guide" forms. This is probably a more valid measure of popularity than is mere sales volume, but it, too, is not without its flaws. Only those who bother to mail in the survey have their "votes" counted, and since they are often limited in their replies by the categories provided on the survey form, "write-ins" are effectively discouraged. In addition, such surveys, particularly SPI's "Feedback," rely heavily on initial impressions. These may change radically one way or another as a game is played over and over again.

A third way to measure game popularity, although one somewhat tedious to carry out, is to find out what games people are actually desperate to find other people to play. The easiest and perhaps the only really practical way to do this is to examine the "Opponents Wanted" ads on the back cover of each *GENERAL* and count the number of requests each game receives. Being a statistics junkie with some time on my hands one weekend, I actually went ahead and did just that. And, folks, I am happy to announce that the results for Vol. 14, No. 1-5, are now in.

Not counted were the rare requests for such non-wargames as *FOOTBALL STRATEGY* and *OUTDOOR SURVIVAL.*

Compare these results with the Reader Buyer's Guide Rating Chart in this issue. You may be surprised at the low correlation. *PANZERBLITZ,* the overwhelming favorite in the "Opponents Wanted" survey, is rated at number 10 on the Jan-Feb 1978 RBG Chart. *CAESAR/ALESIA,* number 7 on the RBG, is a dismal 30th place game according to "Opponents Wanted."

A few other points are worthy of note. One is the overwhelming popularity of games of the World War II period. If we count *BLITZKRIEG* as basically a World War II game, then it is not until we get to *1776* in the number 10 spot that we find a game that deals with another topic. Conversely, if we look at the games on the bottom half of the list, in positions 19 through 38, we find that 10, or over half, are non-World War II games. If you are a Hussite Wars buff, read it and weep, for you are probably alone in a very large crowd of junior Rommels and Pattons.

The survey does produce a few surprises. For a game now fourteen years old, *AFRIKA KORPS* is certainly holding its own. It is especially popular for PBM, but that, at least, is no surprise, since it is so well adapted for it. I thought *RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN* would do a bit better than it did, but perhaps it is still too new. I would expect it to move

up a notch or two in the next couple of years. *SQUAD LEADER* looks rather out of place down there near the bottom of the list sandwiched between *JUTLAND* and *KRIEGSPIEL,* but this is due to the fact that it really only just came out. Look for it to move into the top ten by this time next year, and possibly even into the top five.

The process of compiling this survey brought another point or two to my attention. Judging by the ads I have had to read, some of you could use a refresher course in penmanship. *All* of those misspellings and goofs can't be Avalon Hill typos! Some of you are also not terribly precise in formulating your ads. It is not always easy to tell which games you want to PBM and which you want for FTF play. For example: "Wanted: FTF AK, DD, Jut, Pan, 'Grad. Will also consider PBM." PBM *what,* son? Are you really sure you want to play *JUTLAND* by mail? Sometimes I'm not sure, although I counted ads of this type as being both FTF and PBM requests for all games listed.

It would also be nice if those of you who are looking for AREA rated games would be kind enough to include your current ratings. If you are rated at 900, then somebody rated 1600+ is just wasting a stamp and an envelope by writing to you. I

realize that your rating could change drastically between the time you submit your ad and the time it actually gets into print, but still, some information is better than none.

I am also not sure whether I really like the "shotgun" approach to "Opponents Wanted" requests. Some of you are advertising your willingness to PBM as many as ten or a dozen different games. Either you have got to be kidding, or you must be spending the bulk of your lives running back and forth to the post office. I know AH gives you 25 whole words for your quarter, but that is no excuse to list every game in your collection just because you can't think of anything else to say. Wouldn't it make more sense to be more specific about the two or three games you are really interested in? For a start, how about indicating your side preference and the optional rules you want to use? If you do this in your ad, you and your opponent won't have to waste time negotiating about the matter by mail.

I suppose I'm getting old and crotchety and have no real right to expect lucid writing in the want ads, but try to humor me, will you?

Overall Rank	Game	Total Requests	FTF Rank	FTF Requests	PBM Rank	PBM Requests
1	PANZERBLITZ	267	3	141	1	126
2	PANZER LEADER	237	2	146	3	91
3	3RD REICH	234	1	157	5	77
4	AFRIKA KORPS	213	5	115	2	98
5	LUFTWAFFE	208	4	117	4	91
6	RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN	176	6	105	7	71
7	BULGE	162	11	85	6	77
8	BLITZKRIEG	140	13	72	8	68
9	MIDWAY	135	7	93	15	42
10	1776	134	9	87	12	47
11	STARSHIP TROOPERS	129	12	78	10	51
12	RICHTOFEN'S WAR	126	8	88	19	38
13	WOODEN SHIPS & IRON MEN	126	10	86	16	40
14	D-DAY	122	16	65	9	57
15	STALINGRAD	120	15	69	11	51
16	TOBRUK	105	14	72	21	33
17	FRANCE 40	101	18	57	13	44
18	ARAB-ISRAELI WARS	92	19	56	20	36
19	WATERLOO	91	22	47	14	44
20	GETTYSBURG	89	21	50	17	39
21	WAR AT SEA	86	17	64	26	22
22	TACTICS II	83	20	56	23	27
23	ANZIO	82	24	43	18	39
24	DIPLOMACY	69	25	41	22	28
25	ALEXANDER	68	23	44	24	24
26	KINGMAKER	62	27	38	25	24
27	JUTLAND	61	26	41	27	20
28	SQUAD LEADER	35	29	35	28	14
29	KRIEGSPIEL	30	30	19	29	11
30	CAESAR/ALESIA	29	28	22	32	7
31	CAESAR'S LEGIONS	23	33	14	30	9
32	VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC	22	31	16	33	6
33	1914	21	32	15	34	6
34	GUADALCANAL	20	34	20	31	8
35	CHANCELLORSVILLE	18	35	12	35	6
36	ORGINS OF WORLD WAR II	13	36	10	36	3
37	U-BOAT	3	37	2	38	1
38	BISMARCK	3	38	1	37	2

become entangled in. After all, despite great advances by other members of our fraternity, we still control the major means of contact to the majority of hard-core boardgamers. Furthermore, both companies have proved they can put the hobby before business principles by their unselfish sponsorship of the first three shows. Few rational observers could refute that the ORIGINS platform summoned forth the steady customers of the large companies to see for the first time the products of struggling new competitors. Steve Peek of Battleline has often stated that his sales at ORIGINS II kept his little company going when things were looking bleak. In contrast, AH led the show in sales, but that amount was far less than 1% of its total income for the year. In short, the other manufacturers have placed their faith in us, as both the first and principal backers of ORIGINS, to run the selection and safeguard process. As a result, we have entered into the following agreement with SPI to insure that future ORIGINS will be handled in a more secure manner.

PROPOSED BYLAWS
NATIONAL WARGAME ASSOCIATION

1. NAME. The name of this organization is NATIONAL WAR-GAME ASSOCIATION. It is a corporation of the State of New Jersey, organized pursuant to Title 15, New Jersey Revised Statutes, as a corporation not for profit.

2. OBJECT. The object of this organization is the promotion of the hobby of wargaming, including, but not limited to, the holding of conventions for the purpose of promoting the hobby.

3. MEMBERS.
   a. Governing membership in this organization shall be by invitation of the existing, permanent governing members. The initial permanent governing members shall be: Simulations Publications, Inc., of New York, New York, and The Avalon Hill Game Company, of Baltimore, Maryland.
   b. New permanent governing members shall be selected by a two-third majority vote of the existing members.
   c. Membership as a permanent governing member may be terminated by one of the following methods.
      (1) Voluntary withdrawal upon written notification.
      (2) Filing for bankruptcy, organization, assignment for the benefit of creditors, or any other act of insolvency under state or federal statutes.
      (3) Merger with or becoming a wholly owned subsidiary of another permanent governing member.
   d. In addition, there shall be one temporary governing member, which shall be the corporation, organization, or individual who had responsibility for presenting the convention the previous year.
   e. The permanent governing member may establish other classes of membership, by majority vote, under such conditions and at such times as the trustees may deem suitable.

4. OFFICERS.
   a. *Trustees.* Each governing member shall designate one of its employees to be a trustee of this organization. Any trustee so appointed shall remain a trustee at the pleasure of the governing member appointing that trustee.
   b. *Other Officers.*
      (1) This organization shall have the following officers: a chairman of the board of trustees and a secretary/treasurer.
      (2) The election of officers shall be held annually, at the time of the annual convention.
      (3) Officers shall hold office for a term of one year or until their successor shall be elected.
      (4) One person may not hold the offices of chairman and secretary/treasurer simultaneously.
   c. *Duties of the Chairman.* The chairman shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation; he shall preside at all meetings of the board of trustees; he shall have the management of the business of the corporation and shall see that all orders and resolutions of the board of trustees are carried into effect. He shall co-sign all drafts or checks upon any accounts maintained by the corporation as may be necessary to effectuate the business of the corporation.
   d. *Duties of the Secretary/Treasurer.* The Secretary/Treasurer shall record all votes and minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for that purpose; shall cause notice to be given of all meetings of the board of trustees; have custody of the corporate funds and securities, if any; keep full and accurate records of receipts and disbursements in the corporate books; deposit all money and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the corporation in such depositories as may be designated by the board of trustees; disburse the funds of the corporation as may be ordered or authorized by the board and preserve proper vouchers for such disbursements to render to

the board at the annual meeting, or whenever required, an account of all transactions; perform such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him.

5. MEETINGS.
   a. There shall be one general meeting of the board of trustees, to be held at a suitable time during the annual convention.
   b. Special meetings may be held at times and places during the year agreed upon by two-thirds of the trustees.
   c. A simple majority shall constitute a quorum for the general meeting, to be held at the annual convention.
   d. A two-thirds majority of the board shall constitute a quorum for any special meetings.

6. ANNUAL CONVENTION.
   a. The trustees shall solicit bids for convention sites for the annual convention. These bids shall be in such form as the trustees may from time to time designate. Notice of solicitation of bids shall be published in such magazines or journals as the governing members may publish to alert potential bidders of their right to submit a bid. While such notices need not provide any specifics, they should direct any prospective bidders to contact the secretary/treasurer for more details. The secretary/treasurer shall have available a list of requirements for conducting a convention, which shall be compiled based on previous experience, and approved by the trustees. These requirements shall include, but not be limited to, housing and dining facilities available, facilities needed to support a general exhibition, facilities needed to permit seminars/lectures or other similar programs of an informational nature and facilities needed to hold tournaments and other competitions/demonstrations.
   b. In addition to any written presentation, which shall be submitted in sufficient copies for each trustee to have a copy, any prospective bidder shall make an oral presentation at a meeting held during the annual convention. This meeting shall be open to the public and the public shall be permitted to ask reasonable questions of any prospective bidder concerning the facilities and plans which the prospective bidder has available with a view to eliciting information which will assist in selecting the next site.
   c. The trustees shall, immediately upon the conclusion of all such oral presentations, deliberate in private and select the next site based upon all information presented to them. The majority of the trustees present and voting shall be sufficient to fix the site of the next convention. Voting shall be by secret written ballot.
   d. The successful bidder shall be announced immediately after it has been selected.
   e. Successful bidders shall receive a license from this corporation authorizing them to hold a convention in the Association's name. The trustees may place such obligations and requirements upon the successful bidder as the trustees shall deem necessary to insure a successful convention.
   f. Included in those obligations, but not in limitation thereof, shall be a requirement to obtain policies of insurance against personal injury and property damage which may be incurred by any participant in the convention, the precise amount to be fixed by the trustees but in no event less than One Million and no/100 ($1,000,000.00) dollars for personal injury claims. The trustees shall have the right to increase this amount if the successful bidder proposes to present certain activities which, in the opinion of the trustees, present an unusual risk of personal injury. These policies of insurance shall be obtained so as to insure the interest of the corporation, in addition to any protection obtained by the successful bidder.
   g. In addition, the successful bidder shall furnish a bond or policy of insurance in an amount equal to the anticipated expenses of running the convention, which bond or policy of insurance shall be for the purposes of ensuring that the costs of putting the convention on shall be paid, should the convention fail to take in sufficient money to pay these costs and the bond or policy of insurance shall run to the interest of this Association. If, in the opinion of the trustees, the successful bidder has sufficient income and/or assets such that it could absorb any losses, such corporations need not furnish a bond or policy of insurance but shall, instead, furnish a hold harmless agreement to the Association with regard to such debts.

7. MEETING PROCEDURE. Meetings of the trustees shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, unless expressly modified herein.

8. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT.
   a. These bylaws shall be adopted upon affirmative vote of two-thirds of the governing members, with each governing member entitled to one vote thereon.
   b. These bylaws may be amended in the following manner:
      (1) At the annual meeting and any special meetings.
         (a) By giving notice to all governing members of an intention to propose an amendment at such meeting, which notice shall contain the text of such proposed amendment and shall be furnished to each governing member not less than thirty days prior to such meeting.
         (b) Upon affirmative vote of a majority of the members then present, voting through their respective trustees.
      (2) By mail.
         (a) By sending written notice to all governing members of the proposed amendment.
         (b) The secretary shall then call for votes to be cast not later than a certain date, which date shall be no sooner than fifteen days after the initial proposal is received.
         (c) An affirmative vote of a majority of the trustees, acting on behalf of their respective governing members, shall be required to adopt such amendment. The Trustees, in casting

their vote, shall send it to the secretary/treasurer. The secretary/treasurer, in reporting the results of the voting, shall furnish each trustee with a report indicating how each other trustee who voted actually voted on the proposed amendment.

9. NOTICES. Any notices required to be sent shall be sent to the trustee designated by the respective governing member, at the principal place of business of the governing member which the trustee represents.

It should be noted that this decision was by no means unanimous and that there were dissenting voices at the ORIGINS '79 meeting which was open to the public. Some of the smaller manufacturers wanted a seat on the Association and while it is true that we originally invited the other professionals to join us in the Association, it seemed hardly reasonable to expect several multi-million dollar companies to bow to the dictates of a few part-time publishers whose contribution to the convention does not run farther than their booth fees. Any realist should see that a company which draws the majority of the attendees with free publicity in its journals should be under no obligation to smaller concerns who bring in few or no new attendees by virtue of their efforts. While it is hoped that all companies would contribute free publicity to the extent they are able, their efforts should not be equated with those on a far larger scale.

Neither are we willing to reduce the selection process to a show of hands by all in attendance, as one overzealous lover of democracy suggested. We are, after all, engaged in this pursuit as our livelihood and are not willing to bow to the dictates of the massed membership of Podunque U's wargame club which may decide to attend the meeting as a lark.

We've also heard complaints that several manufacturers were given false information as to the time and place of the ORIGINS meeting. Funny, the convention program we had was quite clear on both points. Suffice it to say that we're embarking on the above course with the best intentions for the hobby and well wishes from most, if not all, of the major manufacturers.

And now it seems we've come full cycle on the question of a travelling ORIGINS, as a major manufacturer has called for ORIGINS to remain on the East Coast where it won't compete with other established regional shows. At this point, my only response is that the 1980 site will be decided by the bidders and fellow voters Howie Barasch of SPI and Jay Hadley of PENN CON.

In expectation of encouraging reliable groups to enter the bidding picture for ORIGINS '80, we are presenting the following guidelines to aid the prospective ORIGINS sponsor in approaching the matter.

The listing which follows is in two parts; the first consists of a dozen requirements which any sponsor must adhere to, and the second being a suggested outline of points to be covered by any bidder in his presentation.

ORIGINS SPONSORS REQUIREMENTS & OBLIGATIONS

1. Selling (Exhibit Area) area with the exception of auctions is restricted to manufacturers or their designated sole agent to the convention.

2. Manufacturers first right of refusal for running tournaments using their own products.

3. Event sponsor's right to entry fee reimbursement if desired.

4. Supply first place ORIGINS plaques for all tournaments/ competition winners at convention (should not deviate substantially from previous years in quality).

5. Help administrate, present and absorb cost, under the guidelines of the Awards Committee, the Charles Roberts and H.G. Wells Awards.

6. Provide facilities as outlined and accepted at presentation.

7. A minimum of 4 quarterly progress reports to committee members and other interested parties (i.e., magazines, clubs, manufacturers)

8. All fees should not increase more than the previous years amount plus that year's inflation rate (use local figures).

9. Program book must be prepared for distribution at or prior to convention, containing all pertinent information at show, and by-mail preregistration offered for both attendance and events.

10. Liability insurance must be taken out for the sum of not less than $1 million.

11. Hold harmless to committee.

12. The committee reserves the right to require a payment and/or fidelity bond for new or inexperienced organizations or groups. Potential bidders falling into this category will be notified in advance of the selection so that they can investigate the cost in their local area of obtaining these bonds. Such information is readily obtainable from any insurance agent in general lines insurance.

ORIGINS BIDDING PRESENTATION

1. Description of organization and its structure to include size, history of existence, etc.

2. Key people described and background information to include any previous convention/organizational experience.

3. Personnel available to work on convention which would be the bidding organization itself and additional aid from outside groups (also their key people and extent of support).

4. Finances of organization (initial start up capital recommended is $1,000.

5. Letter of confirmation from site owners or their representatives that it has or can be reserved.

6. Site facilities:
   A. type of layout, relationship of buildings, general description of buildings (AC) and contents of each.
   b. exhibit hall space (160 Sq. Ft. per booth required).
   c. seminar facilities—number of rooms, size and capacity of each.
   d. tournament facilities—number of rooms, size and capacity of each one, chairs and tables suitable for gaming.
   e. open gaming—amount of space, accessibility to space, location.
   f. other special facilities—athletic fields, proximity to site, other features.
   g. lodging on site—capacity, costs.
   h. on site food, hours, price range.
   i. handicapped facilities, accessibility to events in and around site.
   j. security arrangements, hours of con, exhibit safety, money security.
   k. transportation to site—proximity to major modes of transportation, distance from major town/city.

7. Special activities planned, movies, guest speakers, etc.

8. Proposed fees, by-mail pre-registration, daily, weekend and special entrance fees, booth costs, advertising costs, other costs.

9. Off site lodging, number of hotels/motels, number of rooms available in each, distance from con, costs.

10. Off site food facilities, accessibility, distance, types, price range.

11. Intention of hobby and general advertisement/publicity.

12. Convention date.

Before ending the subject of conventions, I'd like to mention our requirements for attending and plugging same. There are now so many gatherings of varying sizes spread across the country that we can't possibly attend or sponsor events in all of those to which we are invited. Therefore, we have adopted a blanket policy regarding convention attendance which we feel is fair to all concerned and removes the possibility of slighting some to attend others, while utilizing subjective opinions to pick and choose. The following objective formula is our standard for convention participation.

ORIGINS	MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION
2,000+	2 or more representatives
2,000–	EXPENSES REQUIRED

Simply put, we cannot attend a convention without the prospect of making our expenses. To promote the hobby, AH is willing to foot the bill for the salary of their employees and time lost due to such trips, but must insist upon out-of-pocket expenses. This means that we cannot attend a convention for the first time unless the organizers advance us the airfare for our representative(s) and extend complementary lodging. In exchange, our representative will be available to run tournaments, give seminars, etc. Should he return with a report that the convention is large enough (minimum of 2,000

attendees) to warrant a return trip at our expense, we will attend the event in the future at our own expense. This arrangement has been utilized three times in the past year and has resulted in our commitment to attendance at the MDG conventions in Detroit.

We are more than pleased to provide free listings of conventions in the *GENERAL* providing you supply us with the necessary information at least 4 months in advance. We must also request that you list events of interest to AH gamers. Many readers of the *GENERAL* are not hard corps wargamers and have little interest in fantasy, miniatures, or even wargames of other manufacturers. Such people, with interests limited to only a few AH games, would be done an injustice were we to publicize conventions with no planned activities in games which interest them. It is most distressing to a casual gamer to travel upwards of 100 miles only to find little activity in his main field of interest.

As usual, we welcome your comments on this or other subjects.

AH BEST SELLER LIST

Close on the heels of our 1976 Best Seller List, we present the updated lists for 1977. Both lists are based on total retail and mail order sales for our 1977 Fiscal Year which began in April '77 and ended May '78. Titles indicated by an asterisk indicate that they were not available during the full fiscal year due to recent introduction. Figures for the ALL TIME list include all versions of the game sold to date which in some cases *(GETTYSBURG)* can include as many as five different editions.

1977 AVALON HILL BEST SELLERS

Rank	Title	1976 Rank
1.	FACTS IN FIVE	1
2.	STARSHIP TROOPERS	2
3.	ARAB-ISRAELI WARS	—
4.	THIRD REICH	4
5.	ACQUIRE	15
6.	OUTDOOR SURVIVAL	7
7.	PANZER LEADER	3
8.	PANZERBLITZ	12
9.	RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN	19
10.	DIPLOMACY	11
11.	TWIXT	8
12.	VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC*	—
13.	SQUAD LEADER*	—
14.	LUFTWAFFE	14
15.	TACTICS II	10
16.	WAR AT SEA	5
17.	PAYDIRT	—
18.	FEUDAL	16
19.	GETTYSBURG*	—
20.	RAIL BARON*	—

AVALON HILL ALL TIME BEST SELLERS

Rank	Title	1976 Rank
1.	PANZERBLITZ	1
2.	BLITZKRIEG	2
3.	LUFTWAFFE	3
4.	OUTDOOR SURVIVAL	4
5.	TACTICS II	8
6.	PANZER LEADER	—
7.	MIDWAY	7
8.	BATTLE OF THE BULGE	5
9.	GETTYSBURG	9
10.	THIRD REICH	—

It is interesting to note that all games in the ALL TIME list have sold over 100,000 copies.

THE GAMER'S GUIDE TO DIPLOMACY

THE GAMER'S GUIDE TO DIPLOMACY is a 36-page illustrated booklet containing all sorts of valuable information for *DIPLOMACY* buffs of all levels from beginner to expert. Written by Rod Walker, one of the best-known writers on the game today, the *GAMER'S GUIDE TO DIPLOMACY* covers in detail almost every facet of this "game" that has become an obsession for thousands of "players" worldwide.

The *GUIDE* is divided into eight sections. In the Introduction, Mr. Walker discusses the development of the game, its uncommon nature where some vices become virtues, and where ethics become, in some cases, a definite liability, playing objectives, country selection, and more.

In Section II, "Elements of the Game," you will read about such things as communications, alliance and treachery, aggression and defense, cheating, stalemates, convoyed attacks, and receive some tactical hints for better play.

The third section of the *GUIDE* presents a detailed study of the board, styles of play, and choice opening moves and game strategies for each of the seven Powers in *DIPLOMACY*. There are also several revealing charts showing the relative successes and failures of all of the Powers over the course of 803 recorded games.

Section IV presents a sample game, with commentary by the author and an analysis of the diplomacy and tactics of each of the seven players involved. The commentary is accompanied by several easy-to-read maps so you can go right along with the progress of the game.

The fifth section of the *GUIDE* concerns itself with postal *DIPLOMACY*, where you'll find a little history, descriptions of the various ratings systems used, and a few suggestions on how you can get involved in this exciting segment of the game.

Section VI is devoted to variants, with a full description of each of several of the better-known variants, including "Napoleonic" *DIPLOMACY*, "Bid" *DIPLOMACY*, "The Great War", and "Twin-Earths" *DIPLOMACY*. There are also complete rules for the original 1958 version of the game, and as a bonus the back cover of the GUIDE is a reproduction of the original map, for those readers who wish to play the first *DIPLOMACY*.

Section VII deals with clubs and tournaments, an area that the author feels is growing in importance as the ever-increasing rise in postal rates increases the attraction of face-to-face *DIPLOMACY* play.

The final section, entitled "Questions and Answers", attempts to deal with the most common (and several most uncommon) questions that may arise. As the author says, "they include some which are frequently asked as well as some that were asked only once and were debated at length afterwards."

For anyone with even the most casual involvement in this highly demanding game, THE GAMER'S GUIDE TO DIPLOMACY is an absolute must, and well worth the mere $3.00 plus 50¢ postage that it costs. Send your check or money order made payable to: The Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214. Maryland residents please add 5% state sales tax.

commitment. So given that attitude, if one delay was made, another delay would be even more likely.

The reason cited at the time was the need to allow Rommel to attack the Gazala Line and Tobruk before the British attacked him. After Tobruk fell then Malta would be invaded. But given the impetuosity of Rommel, such a halt would be most unlikely. Also politically, given the tremendous victory necessary to capture Tobruk, how could the Axis revert to a defensive posture in North Africa?

Given the approximate date for each invasion plan the next step was to develop an order of battle for each of those plans. Since the battle never actually took place, popular histories and even some of the official histories gave little note to forces available. Some detective work with international assistance filled many gaps and from the mass of data the scenarios emerged. Interestingly, the critical factor limiting all plans was the Axis lack of amphibious invasion craft, exactly the same problem faced earlier by the Germans in 1940. The Italians had no amphibious technology beyond commando operations and were eventually forced to import invasion craft the Germans had constructed for use in the now cancelled Operation "Sealion." Still, these did not fulfill invasion force requirements and had to be supplemented by lagoon schooners, ferries, and fishing boats. With the multiplicity of invasion craft, invasion rules grew more and more complex. But with the game reduced to just one scenario, the problem of special invasion craft could be ignored.

Finally faced was a problem that is probably uniquely Maltese: could all those stone forts on Malta really withstand a modern assault? Central to the *MALTA* design was the analysis of the effectiveness of the Maltese fortifications combined with field, coast, and anti-aircraft artillery. Research showed that the fortification system, while extensive was too old and too small to withstand modern artillery. Yet when a game was tested without them, British resistance broke after the first day. The best solution was to have three classes of fortifications: bastions representing the immense walls surrounding some cities, forts that are large enough to provide cover for infantry, and battery positions which were really those forts too small for anything else. Actually, the coast artillery required fixed installations and could not be moved about. This choice of three types represents considerable testing.

On Malta during spring 1942 there were hundreds of artillery pieces. In daily use were the 112 heavy AA guns and 138 light AA guns. All modern weapons, these composed one of the thickest anti-aircraft defenses seen during WWII. Probably first to see action if the Italian invasion fleet arrived would be the 37 coast artillery pieces. Some former naval pieces probably had little effectiveness while one battery, six 6 pounder Mk I twin mounted guns, had a very high effectiveness. Seven coast artillery pieces, 9.2″ B.L. Mark X, comprised the heavy coast artillery. Presumably these were mounted in barbettes with all-round traverse to prevent an enemy from firing from the blind side of the island with impunity. This artillery was intended to engage enemy warships. Also available were about 40 pieces of "bush" artillery similar to that field artillery employed on Crete. Due to their probable one-shot effectiveness these have been incorporated into the beach defense companies. Probably last to see action would be the one regiment of regular field artillery. It was armed with twenty-four 25 pounders, a most effective weapon. Finally, the three coast artillery pieces stationed on Gozo Island (just to the north-west of

Malta) would not have had any effect on the outcome on Malta proper.

Would anyone ever have created a *MALTA* by itself? Immediately after selling *CRETE* to Avalon Hill I sold them on the idea of including *MALTA* with *CRETE*. In the early design stages *MALTA* was only a flimsy scenario card, but research into the subject and regular playtesting brought *MALTA* out of the pits and into the foreground as a game that could stand on its own. The value of wargaming as an historical tool goes beyond analyzing what history was like; it allows the exploration of the imponderables of history. Some games have been likened to "paper time machines." *MALTA* and *CRETE* are faithful recreations, but they also are games that people play and talk about, games that can't be "solved" in the first sitting.

★★★★★

in the first eight turns. The longer the game drags on, the dimmer the light of victory becomes for the Germans.

There is a fine line between recklessness and the calculated audacity which the German player must follow. Attacks at less than three-to-one odds and important attacks at lower than four-to-one odds put too much faith in luck. Two-to-one assaults are either foolhardy or desperate and should be avoided. The Germans have mobility, surprise and high concentrations of firepower; to dissipate any of these is a sure road to defeat.

Defending Crete completely, i.e., holding all three airfields, is mostly a matter of luck for the Commonwealth player. If the Germans scatter badly on the first drops, if their convoys sink, and if the die has a British flag carved on it, the airfields will hold.

Once the Germans have played their hand, the Commonwealth player must rapidly replan his game. Nonessential units should prepare to evacuate from the ports, and move toward the sector boundaries. A few other Commonwealth units may be able to slip into Maleme to strengthen the airfield's defense if the Germans have established a poor block. Another battalion can be shifted via coastal steamer from Heraklion to either Retimo or Suda if either is in difficulty.

The Commonwealth player must remember that once one airfield is lost, he should abandon the rest of them and go for the evacuation. He must get the noncombat and weak units off first and save the big battalions for killer packs to get the necessary 75 points of German dead.

Although the German player has the unique ability to launch that humiliating aerial envelopment, the Commonwealth player can still turn that euphoric and overconfident airborne glory boy into a bloody fool holding an empty bag. *AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE* is, in that respect, probably the most satisfying wargame ever developed.

★★★★★

accurately portray all the elements (such as politics) involved in planning a military operation. Two big reasons are obvious: first, there is no penalty for failure, excepting of course, bruised and battered egos; second, it can be done again—hopefully right.

A couple of added goodies came to mind as the game progressed which might appeal to those who'd like a better feel for a one-time-shot operation:

1. The German Fallschirmjager Battalions break up and drop as companies as they do in *CRETE*—this will drastically revise the drop plans as companies are harder to form up and far easier to counterattack effectively.

2. *All* three airborne drops should be preprogrammed prior to the start of the game. This will portray the relative inflexibility of most operations once the ball gets rolling and will add more emphasis on the attackers getting to the right place on time.

3. Roll for Allied surprise: 1-4 normal surprise on the first turn, 5-6, no Allied surprise and no first turn movement restrictions. This one is obvious—better Allied intelligence. For added ulcers, roll for surprise *after* the initial Axis drop.

In conclusion, this is a game that puts tremendous pressure on both sides, moreso as more games are played (neither side can afford to be predictable—against the same opponents, different plans will have to be tried). There is enough pressure so that careful thought and preparation beforehand will pay handsome dividends—and make the game all the more exciting.

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Gentlemen:

The first time I tried to play *JUTLAND,* on my hands and knees on the marble floor of my large dining room in my flat in Rome, and against my teen-age son, it very quickly became apparent that things weren't working out the way they should, because of the application of the sea battle scale to ships that, but for the two scale system, would actually have been much closer, with quite different gunnery results. So I put the game away in frustration, and did not take it out again until AH produced a new set of rules and offered as their solution to the two-scale problem the trick of 'stacking' the ship counters to compress three or four into the space they would occupy using the 'sea' scale. It worked, of course, but only up to the point where the ships began to behave differently, e.g. one might stop dead in the water while the others go on.

At about that time John Mansfield sold me a lot of Jutland period 1:3000 scale NAVWAR waterline metal models, and of course there was no way these could or should be 'stacked'. So, to protect my large investment (money and painting) in these cigar box fleets, I was forced to tackle the two scale problem, and the solution was so simple that (a) I felt like an ass for not seeing it sooner, and (b) I was sure there must be a Catch-22. But I can now report that in over two years of successful and satisfying play testing, the Warwick Club has not yet found a catch in the system, and this is what led me to offer it to Randy Reed, AH's Director of Research and Design, while he was attending Cangames '78 in Ottawa last May.

Here is the system, which permits large numbers of ships to be in action on a dining-room table top, or a billiard or ping-pong table (this way all the players can sit!). The waterline models (whether 1:2400, 1:3000, or 1:4800 or whatever) will always be spaced in relation to all other ships *in the same fleet* at their own scale. But the opposing fleets will be separated on a 'sea' scale of 1:10,000 or 1:20,000, whatever the players agree. To determine actual sea scale distance between firing ships and their targets, for purposes of the gunnery tables, a simple adjustment is made before actual firing, as often as necessary (and in practice it is not necessary very often). First the 'base distance' between the two fleets is established by measuring from flagship to flagship. Suppose at a given moment it is 950 mms, using the scale of 1:10,000. This would put those two ships on the 800-1000 mm combat results table. Every other ship firing at another will probably either be closer than or farther apart than 950 mms. Whatever the distance may be (let us suppose the target ship is 1070 mms from the firing ship) it is a compound of the 'base distance' between the fleets or squadrons measured on the 'sea scale' and the distances between the two ships and their respective flagships. If the waterline models are 1:3000 scale, then in the example given 120 mms (1070 minus 950) is accounted for at the 1:3000 scale, and corresponds to 33-1/3% of that or 40 mms at the 'sea scale'. The net adjusted distance is therefore 950 + 40 = 990 mms, *not* 1070 mms. And this adjustment spells all the difference between firing on the 800-1000 mm table, as the flagships would be doing if they fired at each other, and firing on the 1000—1200 mm table, as would happen if the adjustment were not made.

Obviously if the 'sea' scale were 1:20,000, and the ships were 1:3000 scale, the adjustment factor would be half of 33-1/3% or 16-2/3%. For those who do not care for mental arithmetic a pocket calculator or pre-prepared tables could do the work for them. In the example given above, if the sea scale were 1:20,000 instead of 1:10,000, and if the ships were 1:4800 instead of 1:3000, the 1070 mm distance would reduce to about 120 mm ÷ 29 equals 42 mms, for an adjusted distance of 950 mm plus 42 = 992 mms. These factors can be easily worked out.

One last word. If questions arise about the facings of firing ships and their targets when using two different scales, disputes can be resolved quickly by using dummies placed on a line between the flagship and the ship in question, at the appropriate distance from the flagship (e.g. one third using scales 1:3000 and 1:10,000, or one quarter using 1:4800 and 1:20,000, or one sixth using 1:3000 and 1:20,000 etc.) Do the same for the target ship, and the facings are revealed beyond dispute. Or markers such as golf tees can be used for the ship positions, and the ship counters or waterline miniatures themselves can be placed for line-of-sight trial purposes at the adjusted positions closer to their flagships.

David Wilson.
Ottawa, ONT

Dear Mr. Greenwood;

This letter is in reply to a letter printed in the Vol. 15, #1 issue, from Frank Avent of Jackson, Tenn., in regard to *SQUAD LEADER.*

I feel, as an experienced player of the game, that Mr. Avent's letter was misleading, and can result in false impressions being made upon readers who have not yet bought it. Since it is without doubt the finest small-unit-action simulation currently on the market, that would be a shame.

I feel Mr. Avent has left out, either deliberately or by ignorance, two very vital differences between *PANZERBLITZ* and *SQUAD LEADER.* First, he completely ignored the total unpredictable games possible using the DYO (Design Your Own) option which is given an entire Game Set of its own, a detailed treatment far, far better than the general and vague instructions of "Situation 13". I have played very close to 100 games of *SL* since I first obtained the mail-order edition, several microscenarios after reading the ad in an AH flyer; despite all those games, I still find new problems and solutions every time, with no sign of the "can't stand to look at the boards"syndrome Mr. Avent reported. Looking at *SL* boards is a treat all in itself. If he thinks he knows all the vital spots, I suggest he try adding a 105 howitzer to the American OB in the Bucholz scenario, or perhaps a minefield or two. He may find that stone building where he creamed Ivan has been nicely sowed with APM's and becomes a deathtrap instead.

The other major difference Mr. Avent left unexplored is the "hex-vs.-hex" nature of *PAN-ZERBLITZ* combat, as against the real-space LOS of *SQUAD LEADER.* Once you know the territory in *PB,* it doesn't change. Either you can see Bednost or you can't. Period. But LOS in *SL* varies endlessly. Just the winter-summer option of wheatfields totally changes the terrain of three of the four mapboards. (If Mr. Avent is still bored, why doesn't he try fighting for Bucholz in *July,* instead of November? He wants new terrain, bingo! he's got it! Three pinky-new wheatfields that screw up the LOS in the town but good.) I also suspect Mr. Avent is being a bit sloppy in his LOS determinations. Let him put a MMG in the trees at 3W4 and try to decide *exactly* where it will reach, using the "real obstacle" rule. It'll take a while. Multiply this by every hex on every board, and you see why I think he's playing by the "full hex" *PB* terrain definition.

This letter isn't meant as a personal attack on Mr. Avent or his feelings, which are undoubtedly genuine. But I do feel he has misrepresented the game, and out of fairness to AH and the designers, someone should correct the matter.

However, my admiration for *SL* doesn't blind me to its flaws. I simply feel they are different from the ones Mr. Avent reported. The main problem continues to be rules interpretation. Everywhere I go I meet new ideas as to how to play various segments of the game. Rules on routing, rallying, and Berserk units and automatic rally-roll elimination seem especially open to confusion, with four or five different versions for each one. AH's seminar at ORIGINS IV did a good job correcting many of these problems, but in the Replay in the current *GENERAL,* a new one popped up with the occurrence of the Berserk unit in normal-battle MC's. I was under the foolish impression that Berserk units only occurred on *rally* DR's. Oh, me.

Nonetheless, *SL* remains numero uno at the moment, outdistancing its rivals by several light-years. I have the *CROSS OF IRON* gamette from ORIGINS, and am even more delighted than the continued excellence of the game system. The AFV revisions are excellent, the new mapboard a treat, and the rules systems introduced both complex and yet playable.

One last gripe, though: time. So far, despite much experience with original *SL,* I can't play one of the *COI* scenarios in less than five hours, and the record with all rules in use was Scenario Sixteen, *nine* hours! This isn't a complaint, but a gentle warning. At this rate, playing time for the last gamette should run around three weeks. Great for vacations.

Nathan Francis Wallace
Dallas, TX

Your point, as was that of Mr. Avent, is well taken and we appreciate your intended correction of any misconceptions previously wrought. The continued love affair that the game has generated with such a large audience is truly amazing and shows no signs of letting up. The SL seminar at ORIGINS IV was the only "talk" event for which we charged a fee—primarily to cut down the size of the audience in expectation of being able to pass around several delicate printer's proofs of future gamette components. Suprisingly, this did not prevent the assembly of several hundred SL enthusiasts—an unbelievable number of people to my way of thinking willing to lay out a buck to listen to the Hill & Greenwood variety hour. The ovation which followed my feeble attempts at discourse was certainly the ultimate compliment to the game. As to the playing time gripe you are undoubtedly correct in pointing this out as the game's major flaw. This problem will become more and more serious if players don't use restraint in selecting the number of optional rules and variety of armor accompaniment they utilize in each scenario. The game is most rewarding at the company level with just one or two AFVs added to sweeten the situation. Attempts to refight Kursk en masse should be reserved for those hopelessly addicted to monster games.

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Dear AH People,

While the addition of a large number of the rule modifications included in *ARAB-ISRAELI WARS* to the *PANZERBLITZ* and *LEADER* games will greatly improve the realism of the simulations, there is one point in particular that still requires additional rule changes.

One of the greatest sources of aggravation and annoyance to *PANZERBLITZ* players is the case where enemy units on a slope or just out of overrun range can sit in complete safety during the movement phase of a friendly turn, in full view for over 4 minutes (2/3 of a turn), and block movement to the point where the moving units must spend considerable portions of their turn "idling away" their time until the next "turn" to fire arrives.

To counter the impunity of units to block movement and waste the moving units *time,* I believe that provisions should be made in the rules for split "movement and fire" where a unit moves less than 50-75% of its rated movement factor (adjusted for terrain). There is considerable justification for this tactic based on a number of premises.

A unit that only moves a few hexes and therefore has over two minutes of turn time left certainly has sufficient time available to come to a complete stop, aim and fire off its attack factor at the enemy. When one considers that the attack factor represents 1/12 of the total ammo, which is from 2 to 8 shells per tank, two minutes is adequate to apply the full AF to the target. Keep in mind also that tanks and weapons using Opportunity Fire can apply full AF to moving targets they track for as little as 1.5 minutes (1/4 turn), so that "move and fire" represents a natural complement to OF and DF where the flexibility and mobility of tank fire come into conflict before, during and after movement.

If the tank forces of the *PANZERBLITZ* series of games are armed with Opportunity Fire, SMF (Split-Fire-Movement in the "traditional sense") and "move and fire" as proposed here, not only will the battles take on a more fluid and mobile character, but the old tactics of safely blocking all venues of movement with overrun-proof units (by using appropriate terrain) due to the "impotence" of moving units will have to be given up in favor of new and more realistic strategies aimed at stopping the mobile hordes and panzers. And in addition, units will finally be allowed to use the *full* six minutes they are allotted each turn instead of sitting around every so often waiting for their next turn for a chance to fire or move into a newly vacated hex.

Lorrin Bird
Mechanicville, NY

Dear Mr. Greenwood,

In the recent March-April issue of *THE GENERAL* you stated in the Reader Buyer's Guide section that *D-DAY 77* was "a departure from our usual procedures as it is the first game to be reviewed twice due to the new revised rules." As I see it, these "usual procedures" are a mistake. Opinions of a game are apt to change over months and years and the RBG should reflect these changes so as to inform the wargaming public not only of how a game stands by itself, but how it stands in relation to other games. *PANZER-BLITZ* is a good example. When it was released in 1970, it represented a complete departure from the typical "classic" war game. The innovative concepts it introduced such as line of sight/fire and treating terrain as 3-dimensional objects made *PANZERBLITZ* the first of the truly modern tactical wargames. I can well imagine the stir it must have caused among wargamers since I was not involved in the hobby at the time. The ratings that *PANZERBLITZ* received in the RBG reflect this stir. A 2.05 for realism and 4.03 for ease of understanding are the main culprits. These ratings may not sound so absurd by themselves but compare them with other games. *ARAB-ISRAELI WARS* has a 2.31 realism rating—0.26 more than *BLITZ,* and everyone who has played both games knows that *ARAB-ISRAELI WARS* is the more realistic of the two. Then take *SQUAD LEADER's* ease of understanding rating of 3.58, a full 0.45 less than *BLITZ.* Again, *SQUAD LEADER* is much more complex despite its programmed instruction, yet it received the lower rating. Why? Merely because the ratings of *PANZERBLITZ* reflect past opinions that are no longer accurate. This is not an isolated example either. There are others, but unaccurate ratings are going to become more of a problem in the future as games continue to change in design.

Another problem is Avalon Hill's eagerness to discover the public reaction to a new game before the gamers have been given a chance to discover the inner strategies of the game itself. The result? Ratings like *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC's* 3.38 play balance score which favored the U.S. player. You even mentioned that many of you at Avalon Hill were beginning to look upon the Japanese as the favored side so why wasn't this shown in the ratings? Because the players had not yet learned the subtle strategies involved with playing the Japanese side.

A solution to this whole problem would be to rate two games per *GENERAL* (you did this once before but short-changed us a postage coupon!). One could be a recently released game and the other an old one. Some people may say that I take the Reader Buyer's Guide too seriously, but then what is its purpose if it is not to be taken seriously? I am sure that I am just one of many people that would benefit from just such an addition to *THE GENERAL,* an otherwise excellent magazine.

Eric Goulian
La Jolla, Calif.

Your point is certainly well taken, but is hardly new to us. We have long recognized this flaw in the RBG but have failed to act upon it for what we feel is an equally valid reason. No survey such as the RBG is completely without bias. In the case of magazines which rate both games of that publisher as well as the products of other manufacturers there is a natural built-in bias towards the products of the magazine publisher. This is an inherent feature of natural selection; gamers who didn't care for a publisher's style wouldn't resubscribe to that journal. The audience thus becomes more and more selectively oriented towards the policy of the publisher involved. A similar phenomenon exists for house organs such as the GENERAL in that the readers have a built-in bias towards whatever is new. The good points of last year's game are all but forgotten in the frenzy to taste the latest in design innovations in this year's offerings. While there can be no doubt that games do indeed grow out-moded and eventually become relics left behind by the advancing state of the art, there is something to be said for the school of thought that last year's good game is still no less of a good game next year. It is that "what do you think of the game in the year of introduction?" feature which we wish to empha-size. Those seeking ratings which automatically are reassessed and make last year's hits this year's dogs would do better to consult the excellent rating charts compiled by S&T. As for us, we can see no point in merely duplicating the SPI ratings. Whether you agree with our system or not, at least it offers an alternative approach for analysis and one which rates games with little regard to how new they are.

READER BUYER'S GUIDE

TITLE   SUBMARINE   **$12.00**

SUBJECT   WWII Multi-Vessel Naval Game

SUBMARINE earned a cumulative rating of 2.65 which placed it 14th among the 39 games rated to date. *SUBMARINE* is a tactical level game with one player controlling one or more submarines and his opponent handling the surface adversaries—usually consisting of a convoy or capital ship(s) and their escorts. Due largely to the Hidden Movement aspects of the Advanced Game, it is an excellent multi-player game with each player responsible for just one submarine in a wolfpack or one or more escorts of the convoy. Solitaire scenarios are also provided in which subs stalk a randomly moving convoy. As in real life, subs rarely sink the escorts, but must press on to hit merchant vessels within a set number of turns, evading detection and destruction by the constantly searching escorts.

Oddly enough, the game's best rating occurred in the Play Balance category where it garnered the 7th best score to date. Other good performances were noted in the Realism and Excitement Level categories which also scored in the top third of all games rated to date.

The only category rated in the bottom third of the field was that of 'Mapboard'—presumably because of the boredom generated by an unbroken field of blue hexagons. It's hard to make a tactical

naval mapboard particularly colorful. Actually, we were quite pleased with the board as we originally considered going to an unmounted map in order to accommodate the large playing area needed. The low piece density and double hex nature of the ship counters enabled a reduction of the hex size to a point where our largest mapboard could field more hexes than existed on the original unmounted map. The resultant successful compromise is not reflected in the ratings.

As is the case with all scenario games, the playing time can vary dramatically, depending on the version being played. A full blown Campaign Game could last for weeks

1. Physical Quality 2.58
2. Mapboard 3.48
3. Components 2.42
4. Ease of Understanding 2.90
5. Completeness of Rules 2.87
6. Play Balance 2.55
7. Realism 2.38
8. Excitement Level 2.22
9. Overall Value 2.47
10. Game Length . . . . 2 hours

NEW KINGMAKER EVENT CARDS

Are your *KINGMAKER* games getting a bit dull? You can spice them up with the new Event Cards described in Vol. 14, No. 3. Avalon Hill is making available in a special expansion kit a new deck of 48 Events cards including 25 printed Treachery, Gales At Sea, Refuge, Vacillating Allegiance, Catastrophe, and Royal Death cards as

well as 23 blanks for use in your own variants. The entire deck is backed by the same rich *KINGMAKER* design which makes the game such a joy to play and cards from the two decks will be indistinguishable from the rear. This special card deck is available for $2.00 plus postage. Maryland residents please add 5% sales tax.

COMING UP NEXT TIME

THIRD REICH

Q. The Russian winter rule can be side-stepped by a German who times his invasion to leave only 1 unit in Russia during the first winter turn. What can be done about this?

A. Allow the Russian to delay the Russian winter one year at his option. This rule prevents unrealistic handling of forces to take advantage of a rigid rule—in much the same manner Germans are allowed to refuse French naval losses in shore bombardment attacks whose main purpose is to scuttle the French fleet before it can turn Vichy.

Q. Axis paratroops drop on Belfast, and Axis troops quickly overrun Ireland. The Axis player then plays the IRA option; if England cannot fulfill the demands of chit 2 does she forfeit the game?

A. No—chit 2 would be ineffective.

Q. Italy is neutral to the Allies, but already at war with Yugoslavia. Germany declares war on Yugoslavia too, paying 35 BRPs because the existence of a mutual foe activates the alliance (as would a Russian declaration against Germany ally Russia and England). By default, Italy is now immediately at war with the Western Allies, and can launch an offensive option against Egypt straight away, thus circumventing the necessity of Italy reaching 100 BRPs before she can launch an offensive option on the first turn of hostilities against the Western Allies. Is this a legal method of bringing Italy into the war?

A. No. Alliance is activated by Declaration of War against any major power also at war with Germany.

Q. A unit is tracing supply to a port. Is an enemy ZOC over that port sufficient to cut the supply line?

A. Not necessarily—supply can be traced into a ZOC, but not through it.

Q. At what point in the turn are defeated minor neutral units removed?

A. Change rule 3.54 "at the end of the conqueror's turn" to "end of conqueror's Combat Phase."

Q. Is there any time limit to bridgeheads? If the Germans attack Warsaw across the river, they seem to be able to build a BH on Warsaw and keep it there until the end of the game, thus having a reasonable chance of holding Warsaw in 1945. This can also be used against Belgrade, Paris, and Bergen. It does not seem sensible, yet no rule prevents it.

A. Bridgeheads should be removed as soon as they are left unoccupied; as long as they are occupied they may remain in place as a sort of fortified position.

Q. May minor neutral fleets be based anywhere but at home?

A. No.

Q. So long as they remain based within their home country, can Minor Neutral air units attack/defend units outside their country?

A. No.

Q. Last paragraph rule 4.7: Is this an additional method of being in supply, rather than the only method? If the airborne unit happens to be in conventional supply but not adjacent to a friendly unit, can it be rebuilt?

A. Yes; yes.

Q. Can the paratroop unit be rebuilt if it was stacked with a friendly unit which was also eliminated?

A. Yes—if non-partisan.

Q. Does the last sentence of 9.6 allow an amphibious assault even if Gibraltar is occupied by nine or more fleet factors?

A. No.

AVALON HILL RBG RATING CHART

The games are ranked by their cumulative scores which is an average of the 9 categories for each game. While it may be fairly argued that each category should not weigh equally against the others, we use it only as a generalization of overall rank. By breaking down a game's ratings into individual categories the gamer is able to discern for himself where the game is strong or weak in the qualities he values the most. Readers are reminded that the Game Length category is measured in multiples of ten minutes and that a rating of 18 would equal 3 hours.

	Cumulative	Physical Quality	Mapboard	Components	Ease of Understanding	Completeness of Rules	Play Balance	Realism	Excitement Level	Overall Value	Game Length
1. RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN	2.24	1.98	1.85	2.02	2.24	3.07	2.78	2.41	1.78	2.07	28.5
2. SQUAD LEADER	2.25	1.97	1.85	1.82	3.58	2.94	2.36	2.02	1.82	1.92	13.6
3. W.S. & I.M.	2.34	2.40	3.07	2.38	2.88	2.39	2.07	1.85	1.88	2.10	9.2
4. ANZIO	2.36	2.11	1.74	1.94	3.74	2.88	2.62	2.00	2.09	2.15	21.7
5. PANZER LEADER	2.50	2.41	2.17	2.34	3.65	2.60	2.67	2.19	2.34	2.20	13.1
6. RICHTHOFEN'S	2.52	2.28	2.62	2.12	2.63	2.94	2.60	2.66	2.39	2.45	6.0
7. CAESAR—ALESIA	2.53	2.92	2.71	2.78	1.71	1.85	3.36	2.64	2.71	2.07	27.9
8. 1776	2.56	2.16	1.76	2.45	3.27	2.62	3.08	2.72	2.63	2.36	33.4
9. 3rd REICH	2.57	2.12	2.47	2.34	4.15	3.22	2.59	2.24	1.95	2.05	34.9
10. PANZERBLITZ	2.58	2.00	3.00	2.03	4.03	3.00	3.06	2.05	2.07	2.05	14.0
11. KINGMAKER	2.60	2.26	2.84	2.34	2.83	3.07	1.86	3.65	2.14	2.41	20.2
12. DIPLOMACY	2.60	2.35	2.26	3.13	1.87	2.39	2.09	4.57	2.30	2.43	32.6
13. CAESAR'S LEGIONS	2.64	2.32	2.36	2.31	2.14	2.23	3.73	3.05	2.86	2.73	13.5
14. SUBMARINE	2.65	2.58	3.48	2.42	2.90	2.87	2.55	2.38	2.22	2.47	12.1
15. STARSHIP TROOPERS	2.67	2.27	3.11	2.07	2.43	2.70	3.57	3.39	2.20	2.32	17.3
16. ARAB ISRAELI WARS	2.68	2.34	3.03	1.86	3.31	2.70	3.57	2.31	2.51	2.52	13.5
17. CHANCELLORSVILLE	2.68	2.62	2.57	2.45	2.26	2.52	3.43	3.07	2.55	2.64	18.8
18. VICTORY—PACIFIC	2.70	2.47	2.36	1.85	2.21	2.79	3.38	3.91	1.94	2.53	18.0
19. FRANCE 1940	2.82	1.75	2.05	1.85	3.30	3.25	4.05	3.00	3.40	2.75	16.0
20. JUTLAND	2.83	2.84	—	2.39	3.27	3.06	3.24	2.53	2.61	2.67	29.7
21. LUFTWAFFE	2.87	2.41	2.91	2.04	2.86	3.02	3.73	3.41	2.82	2.64	24.2
22. MIDWAY	2.88	2.75	3.12	2.56	2.78	2.90	3.66	3.08	2.37	2.73	15.7
23. AFRIKA KORPS	2.90	3.04	3.10	2.92	2.12	2.29	3.39	3.57	2.91	2.77	13.5
24. ALEXANDER	2.93	2.99	3.21	3.19	2.55	2.98	3.43	2.76	2.43	2.86	12.7
25. ORIGINS OF WW II	2.98	2.69	2.58	2.80	2.00	2.22	4.00	4.06	3.11	3.40	9.6
26. CRETE—MALTA	3.04	2.80	3.10	3.00	3.03	3.05	3.43	3.18	2.76	3.05	18.8
27. GETTYSBURG '77	3.04	2.52	2.48	2.50	4.32	3.79	3.07	2.46	3.02	3.21	27.6
28. D-DAY '77	3.07	3.72	4.54	3.69	2.19	1.94	3.00	3.19	2.94	2.44	20.2
29. BLITZKRIEG	3.09	3.39	3.28	3.30	3.14	2.89	2.25	3.67	2.81	3.05	24.0
30. TOBRUK	3.10	2.85	4.68	2.13	4.32	2.77	3.06	2.11	3.00	2.96	21.6
31. WATERLOO	3.18	3.29	3.27	3.11	2.01	3.11	3.27	4.32	3.21	3.01	16.2
32. WAR AT SEA	3.21	3.18	3.96	2.74	1.74	2.35	3.73	5.12	2.93	3.15	6.9
33. BULGE	3.21	2.93	2.80	3.31	3.08	3.40	3.53	4.11	2.81	2.95	20.0
34. D-DAY '65	3.43	3.72	4.54	3.69	2.56	3.09	4.38	4.50	3.60	3.56	17.8
35. STALINGRAD	3.44	3.43	3.74	3.40	2.07	2.52	4.37	5.15	3.28	3.04	20.0
36. TACTICS II	3.51	3.43	4.30	3.59	1.46	2.32	5.57	4.59	4.20	11.6	
37. 1914	3.87	3.18	3.40	3.26	5.46	4.32	3.86	1.95	5.48	3.86	55.0
38. GETTYSBURG '64	3.88	3.59	3.84	3.54	2.68	3.39	5.08	4.51	4.34	3.98	12.5
39. KRIEGSPIEL	4.04	3.77	4.20	3.85	2.13	2.94	2.93	6.09	5.20	5.29	9.8
AVERAGE	2.92	2.73	3.02	2.70	2.79	2.82	3.24	3.38	2.90	2.84	19.6

Vol. 15, No. 1 of THE GENERAL polled a 3.48 cumulative rating, which was a slight improvement over Vol. 14, No. 6, but still far worse than our average effort. The individual articles fared as follows in our 1200 point scoring system based on a random sampling of 200 readers with 3 points awarded for 1st place, 2 for second, and 1 for third.

Would you believe a television series on wargames? Our British brothers in the wargaming fraternity have done just that according to a report in the June '78 issue of *BATTLE* magazine. They report that on February 23rd, Tyne Tees Television made wargaming and television history by screening the first of six 30 minute weekly programs on the miniatures side of our hobby. The series utilized prominent English actor Edward Woodward as commentator, a dozen well known miniaturists, and a cast of thousands (11,000 to be precise—colorfully painted figures all). Two other British stations have already bought the series and hopes are high that other regions will soon enter negotiations to screen the series nationwide. Five months were spent filming the series and each minute of film represents several hours of judicious editing. In fact it is reported that the time and effort put into the series exceeds that for most tv dramas. The format for each show consists of a briefing utilizing old maps of the battle and analysis of existing terrain and forces. The game is then replayed in front of the cameras with the aid of judicious editing allowing the forces to virtually fly across the games table. A concluding summary wraps the whole thing up very nicely with an analysis of how the latter day Wellingtons and Napoleons fared. The six battles chosen for the series consisted of: Chalons-sur-Marne, 451 A.D.; Edgehill, 1642; Battle of the Nile, 1798; Waterloo; Gettysburg; and an imaginary skirmish in 1944 France.

Avalon Hill postal enthusiasts have not let the absence of pbm sheets deter them from engaging in pbm battles with their favorite games. Using any of a multitude of homemade, complicated systems to overcome the problems of multi-phase turns and defensive fire situations postal games abound in just about any game you care to mention. Recently two readers went out of their way to make their systems a little easier by having professional style pbm sheets made up for their favorite games featuring reduced mapsheets similar to our *PANZERBLITZ* PBM kit. Walter Cullop of 732 Newhall Ave, Burlington, CA 94010 designed such a 8 x 10" sheet for our *PANZER LEADER* game complete with type set tables on the back for resolution of combat and multi-unit hex capacity. Wayne Rice of 289 Main St., Rutland MA 01543 commissioned a similar 10 x 14" printing job on our *THIRD REICH* mapboard. Both individuals have expressed an interest in supplying the sheets to fellow postal enthusiasts at cost, but give them a break and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their reply.

Infiltrator's Report

Congratulations of sorts are due for the longevity and expert play of Jim Reilly's OOPS and Bryan Mundell's Ithica/CORSIMA clubs for staggering to a first place tie in the first AH PBM team championships with 9½ wins apiece. The tournament, which started in 1975, was plagued by dropouts, rule interpretations, and all the other hangups of postal play complicated by excessive time delays due to the international nature of the competition (Nicky Palmer's European based National Games Club placed third with 9 wins). The two clubs split a $90 cash prize.

Latest word on ORIGINS '79 has it moving off a college campus for the first time ever and into the facilities of the George Washington Motor Lodge in suburban Philadelphia. The dates have also changed to July 19th through the 22nd making possible another four day event, similar to that first offered at ORIGINS '78.

MOUNTING THE THREAT, JULY, 1944 by John T. Sweet. San Francisco: 1977. 142 pp. Presidio Press, $12.95. This hardbound book is a study of Operation Goodwood, the British offensive of July 18, 1944, which proved to be a decisive factor in the battle of Normandy. The battle generated a barrage of recriminations between the American and British commanders; the Americans criticizing their allies' strategy and tactics, while the British just as vehemently defended their handling of the battle. Mr. Sweet attempts to look at the battle from all viewpoints and concludes that the commanders involved can neither be overly praised or blamed for the results of the operation. The major flaw in this work is its lack of depth and scope and the book's high price. All in all, the author gives us an adequate narrative of an important battle which does suggest some valid conclusions; but lacks the historical research which the subject demands.

When we request that gamers send a stamped, self-addressed envelope with their questions we do so for a reason. Namely, after paying an individual to answer your question (which more often than not is answered in the rules anyway) we feel that you should be willing to pay the postage *both* ways. While this seems insignificant on the surface, postage costs quickly mount up when you answer hundreds of such letters every week. Therefore, we must request your indulgence in honoring our request to pay the postage costs of answering your questions. This means don't send questions in our postage paid envelopes or expect them to be enclosed in orders. The people who work in the mail order department don't know how to play the games—they can't answer your questions. They must be forwarded to the proper designer for answers and by that time your order has long since left. In addition, it would help greatly if your questions were phrased into a "yes" or "no" format. This often means including a diagram where appropriate as our designers don't have the time to set up virtually hundreds of situations by grid-coordinates. Lastly; if you want faster service be sure to mention the fact that you are a *GENERAL* subscriber, as *GENERAL* readers get preference over non-subscribers.

The SON of ORCCON, the third annual Orange County Simulations Convention, will be hosted by the Armchair Strategists Club January 5, 6, and 7, 1979 at California State University in Fullerton, CA. Admission is $3.50 if pre-registered and $5.00 at the door. A full slate of the usual AH tournaments are scheduled. For further information, write: Alan Emrich, 2922 Angler Lane, Los Alamitos, CA 90720.

INFANTRY ATTACKS—Potsdam, 1937. (Attacks, Inc., P.O. Box 2583, Laurel, MD 20811). 265 pages, plus many sketch maps. $14.95. This is the English translation of Rommel's Infanterie Greift an, reprinted in the U.S. Infantry Journal in 1944. The main theme of the book, and the reason for its publication in this country, is to stress the importance of basic principles of training, security, prior planning and the need for initiative on the part of all junior officers. In each chapter, Rommel relates his experiences as a junior combat officer on the Western, Rumanian and Italian fronts during the First World War. These accounts range from squad level combat to battalion sized engagements; all accompanied by minute details such as unit designations, terrain descriptions, and numbers of men involved. Each chapter concludes with the author's personal observations and comments as to the proper tactics that must be employed when faced with the tactical situation just described. This is a first rate small unit combat narrative, which even today can be useful in training troops and leaders. For the board gamer, *Infantry Attacks* provides dozens of historical scenarios which can be translated from its pages to the mapboards of our *SQUAD LEADER* game utilizing practically all that game's terrain, infantry, artillery and infantry support weapon units.

For those of us with overactive imaginations, Contest #84 may well have proved to be a case of over-analysis. The answer is, of course, to hold tight and zap the M7 unit at 4-1. Note, however, that had the German units NOT been in a city hex, the correct solution would have been to march three of the German units up the hill to zap the light armored stuff while one infantry unit played fatal rear guard on the bridge. But the city means that the Germans can stay snug in the city with much less to fear from the Allied 1-2 CAT.

Only three readers were able to give viable solutions to the *GETTYSBURG* puzzle in Contest No. 83, although we also accepted three near miss submissions. More than half the contestants committed the same error of putting the Jenkins cavalry unit into an attack rather than positioning it in hex 21 where it must be placed to maintain the isolation of all Union units. The key to the solution was concentration of attack in order to force the Union units to eliminate themselves in costly counterattacks. At least five Confederate units were required in one attack and four others in a second attack to accomplish this.

Those who found the solution or were close enough to be judged winners were: T. Swider, Endwell, NY; P. Dennis, Leavenworth, KS; M. Sincavage, Kernersville, NC; W. Carnes, Indianapolis, IN; S. Slingsby, Springfield, PA; and C. Baxter, Kamloops Province, BC.

RUSSIA
Turns 3-8
1

BLACK SEA

Axis: 1 POC   Allies: 1 POC

After turn 3 Italian ships may enter if Mediterranean is Axis controlled. British not allowed.

TURKEY
Turns 4-8
2

GREECE

Alexandria

EGYPT 2

UNITED STATES

CARIBBEAN SEA
VITP JAPAN 3 POC
ALLIES 1 POC
No Germans before turn 3; Italians Not Allowed

NEUTRAL

READER BUYER'S GUIDE

TITLE: FEUDAL $10.00

Chess-style Medieval War Game

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate all categories by placing a number ranging from 1 through 9 in the appropriate spaces to the right (1 equating excellent; 5-average; and 9-terrible). EXCEPTION: Rate item No. 10 in terms of minutes necessary to play game as recorded in 10-minute increments. EXAMPLE: If you've found that it takes two and a half hours to play FRANCE 1940, you would give it a GAME LENGTH rating of "15." Participate in these reviews only if you are familiar with the game in question.

1. Physical Quality _____
2. Mapboard _____
3. Components _____
4. Ease of Understanding _____
5. Completeness of Rules _____
6. Play Balance _____
7. Realism _____
8. Excitement Level _____
9. Overall Value _____
10. Game Length _____

The review sheet may be cut out, photocopied, or merely drawn on a separate sheet of paper. Mail it to our 4517 Harford Road address with your contest entry or opponents wanted ad. Mark such correspondence to the attention of the R & D Department.

Game to be reviewed next: _____

Opponent Wanted   25¢

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

NAME_____ PHONE_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____
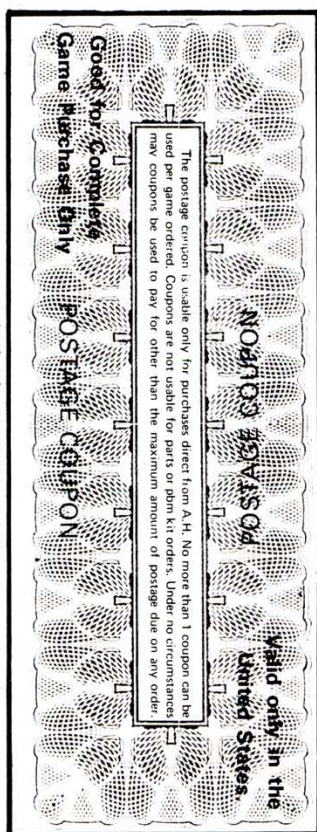
CONTEST NUMBER 85

AIR ASSAULT ON CRETE

It is a crucial turn in a CRETE game. The German player has just captured Retimo Airfield but now he must hold onto it to "get something going" since he is bogged down at Heraklion and Maleme. It is the German player segment and the German player fully expects an all-out attack on the Allied portion of the turn. If this were the seventh turn of an Advanced-level game of CRETE and you were the German player, what would you do, using ONLY the two German units pictured on the mapboard? Simply indicate your choice for a course of action below:

☐ 1. Retreat towards Retimo.
☐ 2. Stand pat on the airfield and do nothing.
☐ 3. Attack the units in hex A.
☐ 4. Attack the units in hex B.
☐ 5. Attack the units in hex C.
☐ 6. None of the above.

Contestants are limited to one entry. In the case of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine ten winners.
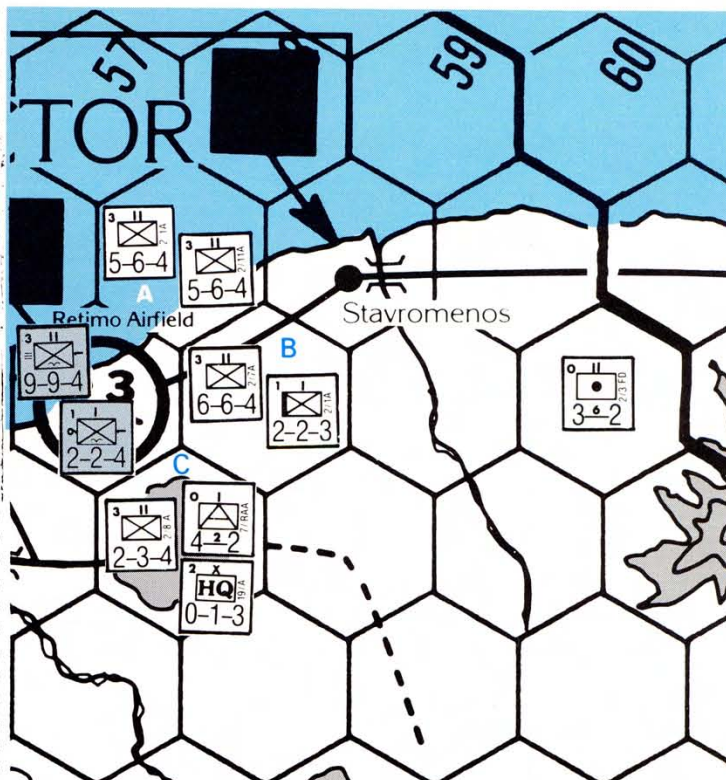
Ten winning entries will receive certificates redeemable for free AH merchandise. To be valid an entry must be received prior to the mailing of the next *GENERAL* and include a numerical rating for the issue as a whole as well as list the best 3 articles. The solution will be announced in the next issue and the winners in the following issue.

ISSUE AS A WHOLE:..........(Rate from 1 to 10; with 1 equating excellent, 10= terrible)

Best 3 Articles:
1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

NAME_____
ADDRESS_____
CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____